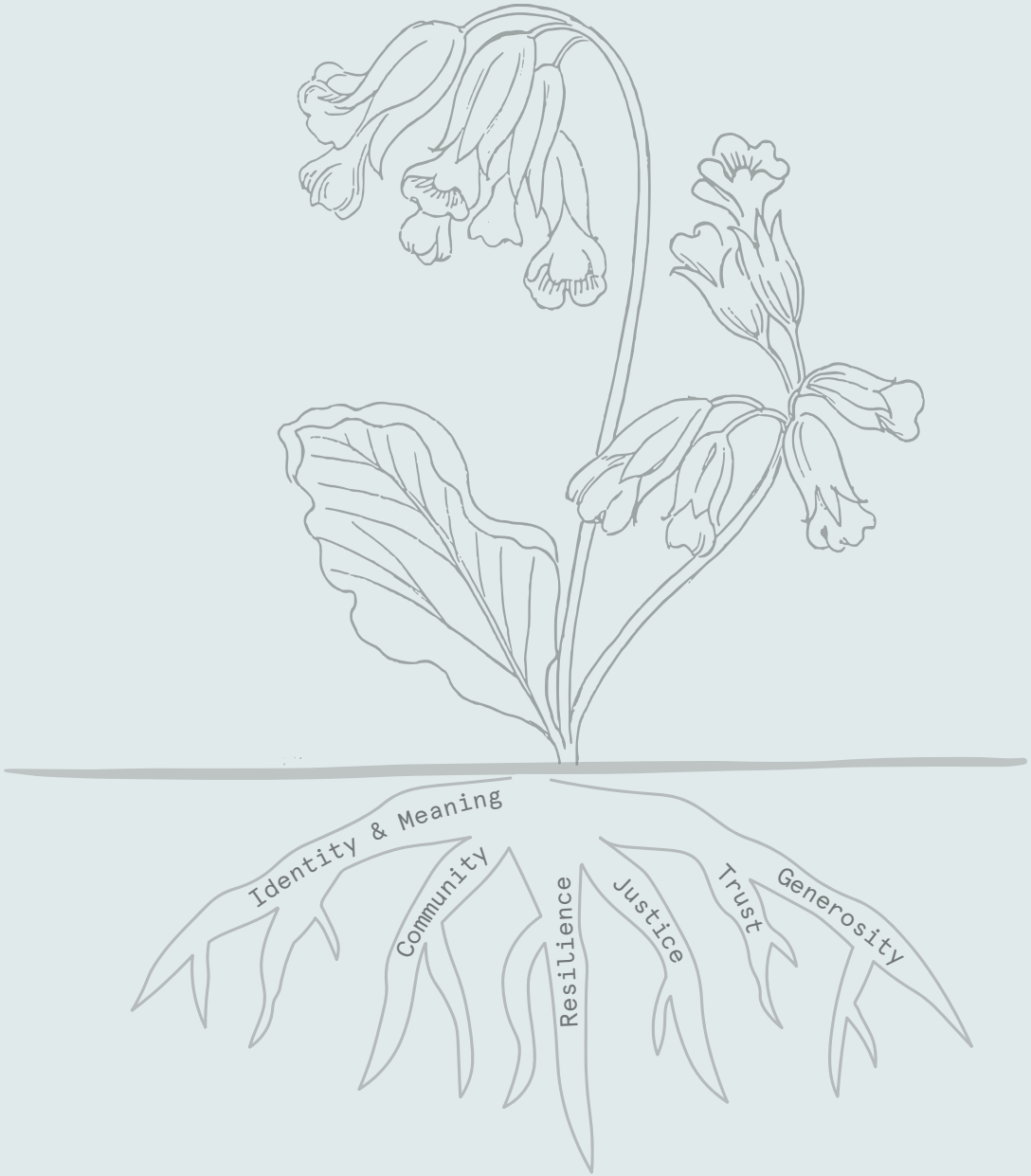

every. one can flour. ish

WHITE PAPER

Version 1

"The longest journey is the journey inwards." - Dag Hammarskjöld

"The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn."
- Ralph Waldo Emerson

"Every human being is a unique miracle; he knows this well enough–even if he hides it: there has never been another like him, and there never will be."
- Friedrich Nietzsche

"Freedom is nothing else but a chance to be better."
- Albert Camus

"To love someone is to see them as they are, and to let them be that."
–Tove Jansson

"The oak fought the wind and was broken, the willow bent when it must and survived."
- Robert Jordan

"When I discover who I am, I'll be free."
- Ralph Ellison

"I am in debt not only to people; there is the whole of nature as well. The animals that walk the earth, the birds in the skies, the trees and flowers–they have all told me some of their secrets."
- Selma Lagerlöf

"A flower does not think of competing with the flower next to it. It just blooms."
– Zen Buddhist proverb

"We are created in our dreams, and it is there that we grow beyond our limitations."
– Liv Strömquist

"If you are very strong, you must also be very kind."
- Astrid Lindgren

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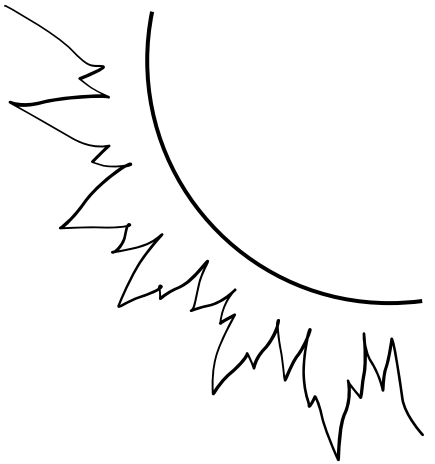
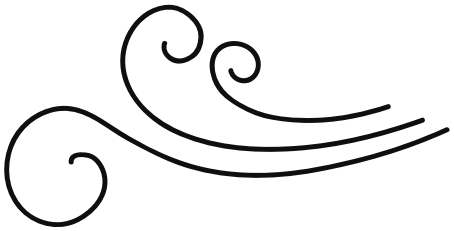
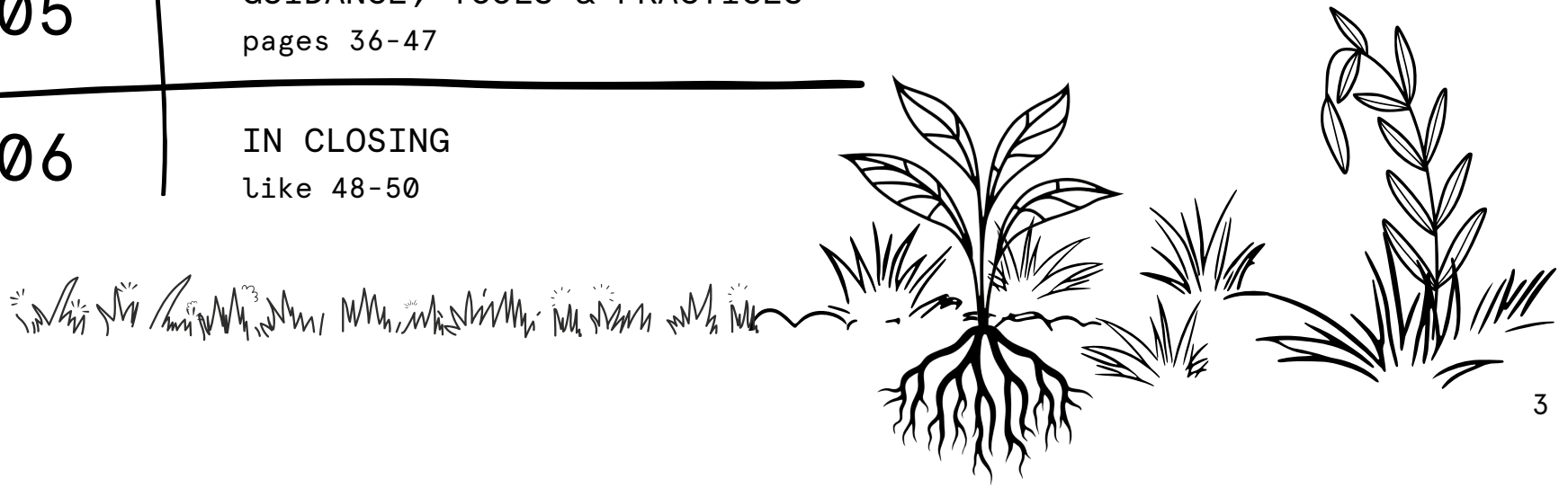






Intent, approach, and ethical framework

"Everyone Can Flourish" is a vision that inspires both personal and collective growth. Its roots run deep in Åland's unique history and culture, where community, sustainability and shared responsibility have been at the heart of everyday life. This vision grows out of a tradition of collaboration - between individuals and society - where we work together to create the conditions for flourishing, both as people and as a community.

At the heart of the vision is a profound insight: that each of us is part of something greater. Our lives are interwoven - with each other, with our communities, and with the Earth that sustains us. By highlighting these living connections, "Everyone Can Flourish" points the way to a future where we not only survive - we thrive.

The vision draws its strength from its hopeful message of justice, belonging, and shared humanity. It reminds us that goodness isn't just a means to an end - it is the end. Not a strategy, but a stance. Not a transaction, but a source of meaning. A foundation not only for a meaningful life, but for a life that feels well worth living.

But roots alone are not enough - they need nourishment and care to grow. Still, for the vision to truly resonate, it must meet people where they are - in their daily rhythms, in their communities, in the real challenges they face.

This white paper embraces that challenge. By deepening the vision and grounding it in practical tools, guiding principles, and pedagogical models, we begin to build a living bridge between idea and action.

Because "Everyone Can Flourish" is more than a philosophy of life - it's a practical force for transformation.

Who is the White Paper for?

This White Paper is for those who want to deepen their understanding of "Everyone Can Flourish" and reflect on what the concept means in their own context. It supports those who work with – or wish to integrate–this approach into their organizations and community efforts.

When we face major societal challenges, the instinct is often to act immediately. There's a sense of urgency – we must do something now! In that rush, theory and conceptual development are sometimes viewed with suspicion, as if they delay or distract from practical work. But without a clear and thoughtful framework, we risk addressing only symptoms, not root causes.

That's why concepts matter. How we understand a problem shapes the solutions we can even imagine. Concepts aren't obstacles to action – they're the foundation for acting with purpose. It's not just about what we do, but why and how. Symbolic gestures may raise awareness, but real change demands a deeper understanding of the systems and mindsets that shape our world. Concepts help us spot patterns, challenge assumptions, and open new paths forward.

This White Paper isn't a general information leaflet – it's a practical guide for reflection and dialogue. Its ideas come alive through targeted guides, support materials, training efforts, and conversations tailored to different audiences and needs. In this way, it becomes a living resource – not a symbolic ambition, but a process for meaningful change.

Guiding ethical principles

From an ethical standpoint, it's essential to clarify that the content of this White Paper–from core texts and illustrations to frameworks for measuring flourishing – is not about "fixing" other people's values, beliefs, or worldviews. When we treat people as objects to be changed, we risk denying their inherent power as active agents in both personal and collective development. That mindset – of "correcting" others– only reinforces the very dualism and power structures we aim to dismantle.

Instead, this work seeks to spark curiousity: offering tools, spaces, and conditions that encourage people to explore new perspectives for themselves. It's an invitation to cultivate a culture of inner growth and mutual support – grounded in shared, universal human experiences. Real change is not imposed; it can only emerge through meaningful conversations and the right conditions. When those conditions exist, they challenge outdated norms and open space for authentic, self-directed transformation – individually and together.

The White Paper and the theoretical frameworks we draw on – such as Kotter's change model – do not aim to rely on external pressure, but rather to stimulate an inner journey of sustainable development. The external impact of this work is expected to grow naturally as people deepen their understanding of their own inner drives and shared responsibilities.

Key strengths of "Everyone Can Flourish"

- Inspiration and Hope: The vision embraces the power of possibility and paints a hopeful picture of a future where everyone has the chance to flourish.

- Interconnectivity: It brings to light the deep links between individuals, society, nature, and the systems that make sustainable living possible.

- Ethics and Goodness: Grounded in justice, community, and shared values, the vision affirms that goodness is not a strategy or transaction, but a stance - and a source of meaning.

Obstacles and opportunities for further exploration

- The perception of the abstract: For many, "Everyone Can Flourish" may feel more like an ideal than a practical framework – especially for those facing life's immediate pressures. Concepts such as "social structures" or "everything is connected" can seem distant or intangible. The challenge is to ground the vision in everyday experience without losing sight of its deeper philosophy.

- Static or superficial interpretation of flourishing: Some may see flourishing as a final destination rather than an ongoing, living process of reflection, renewal, and growth. There's also a risk that the vision is reduced to material success or visible accomplishments. Its deeper message – that flourishing is both inward and outward, dynamic and evolving – needs to be more clearly emphasized.

- The individual's journey and need for practical guidance: The vision could be strengthened by concrete examples of how individuals can take small, meaningful steps toward flourishing. Without tangible, inspiring guidance, it risks remaining theoretical rather than actionable. Tools and insights that support personal growth are essential for making the vision both real and relevant.

The foundational text: “Everyone Can Flourish” as both anchor and aspiration

A vision like “Everyone Can Flourish” is both far-reaching and deeply meaningful, with the power to inspire, transform, and strengthen our sense of community and belonging.

But without a clear and well-crafted foundational text, even the strongest vision can lose impact - risking abstraction and making it harder to put into practice. In real-world settings, we’ve seen how certain misunderstandings and barriers have limited how the vision is received and applied.

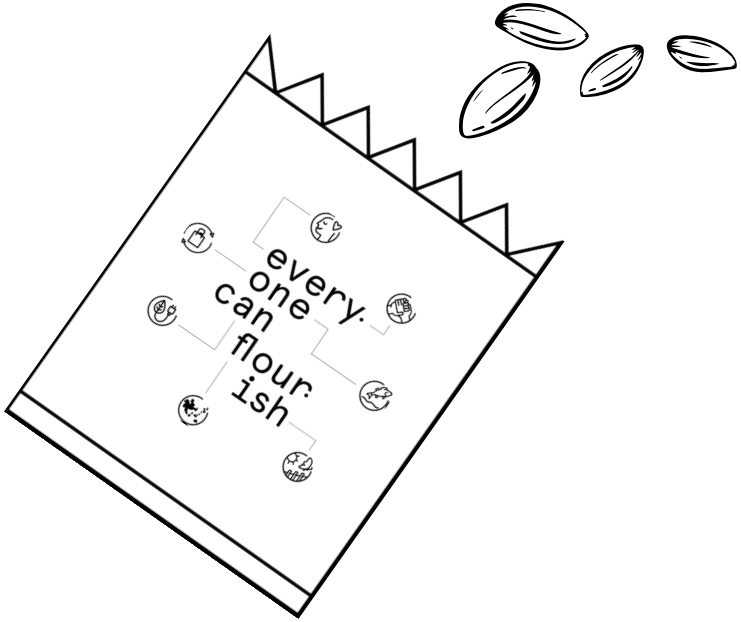
This foundational text is the heart of the vision. It’s not just a set of words, but a reflection of the values, principles, and shared goals that guide us. It’s through this text that the vision becomes tangible - a common thread we carry into our decisions, our work, and the way we communicate.

Planting a seed for meaning and direction

A well-formulated foundational text creates the conditions for the vision’s ideas to take root and grow strong. It helps us to:

- Make the vision concrete and understandable, so it feels close and relevant to everyone
- Build a shared understanding and a common direction forward
- Inspire action and collaboration, where each actor sees their role in bringing the vision to life

With the foundational text as our starting point and guiding philosophy, we can build on, deepen, and anchor the vision in a way that unites us all.



“Everyone Can Flourish”: A vision rooted in shared meaning

"Everyone Can Flourish" is a guiding principle - an enduring belief that each person holds the potential to grow and contribute to a sustainable society close to home and heart - where climate and environmental responsibility, social justice, and human kindness shape the world we share.

Our vision is to nurture the conditions for genuine well-being, where people can share their unique gifts in community with others and in harmony with the natural world in its entirety. At its core, it honors the power of choice - that flourishing is a life path we join willingly, each step reflecting our deep conviction and shared commitment.

By rooting ourselves in values such as trust, resilience, generosity, community, and justice, we build a strong foundation that carries us all.

"Everyone Can Flourish" is a lifelong journey of growth and renewal - where our struggles strengthen us, and our triumphs unite us.

Rooted in our fundamental values, and with the support of our communities, we hold the power - in every choice, every greeting, and in every act - to shape a sustainable and peaceful future where both individuals and society flourish together.

Insights unveiling text development and comprehension

1 The adjective ‘guiding’ makes the principle actionable and accessible. It signals that “Everyone Can Flourish” is a direction to follow, not just an idea to reflect on. It builds bridges between vision and everyday life and reflects the balance between independence and community.

2 ‘Principle’ is the best word choice to lead with because it combines the strength of values with practical application.

3 Potential to grow and contribute’ refers to individual development and one’s role in the community - to grow personally while strengthening society through values-driven action.

4 Broad focus on sustainability that encompasses both nature and people.

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5 Transforms the vision into a shared responsibility, pride and strengthens the sense of ownership.

6 Flourishing is based on realistic expectations and shared responsibility.

7 To flourish is to engage actively and choose consciously.

8 Situates the text within a firm foundation of values reflective of Åland’s identity and traditions.

9 Reflects mankind’s history of resilience and community.

10 Flourishing is a process, not a destination. The text emphasizes the importance of everyday actions. Flourishing is a lifelong journey – step by step – a journey that extends to future generations.

1

The adjective ‘guiding’ makes the principle actionable and available.

The adjective ‘guiding’ adds depth and function to the principle. It means that it is not only perceived as a philosophical idea but as a practical compass, which can guide us on our journey towards flourishing, in both individual choices and collective actions. For Ålanders, who value independence and responsibility, ‘guiding’ becomes an important bridge between idea and action. It makes the principle alive and applicable in everyday life and emphasizes that “Everyone Can Flourish” is a process, not an end goal. This aspect strengthens the connection to the Åland spirit of community and sustainability. At the same time, it respects the freedom and choice of the individual, and offers support without being imposing.

2

‘Principle’ is the best choice of word to lead with because it combines the strength of values with practical application.

The word is more actionable than ‘vision’, more accessible than ‘framework’ and deeper than ‘idea’. ‘Vision’ can feel distant and idealistic, while principle signals something we can live by and use as a guide in everyday life. ‘Framework’ sounds technical and bureaucratic. An ‘idea’ can feel fleeting, but a ‘principle’ is rooted in conviction and long-termism - something that reflects Åland’s values. ‘Principle’ is inclusive and relatable to everyone, regardless of background and provides a balance between individual and community, as well as capturing the Åland spirit of freedom and shared responsibility, and guides both our personal choices and collective actions.

3

"Potential to grow and contribute" sums up the essence of “Everyone Can Flourish” by highlighting both the individual's personal development and their contribution to the common good.

‘Growing’ refers to the continuous opportunity to develop one’s unique gifts, regardless of life situation. It can be about building self-awareness, learning from adversity, or strengthening one’s relationship with others and nature. ‘Contributing’ means using this development to positively impact one’s surroundings - by supporting others, building trust, and acting on values such as justice and community. The combination of growing and contributing is dynamic: personal development strengthens community, and community nourishes individual growth.

4 “Climate and environmental responsibility, social justice, and human kindness is about not just about individual actions or values but about a coherent approach where humans and nature are united in a sustainable interaction in a common future.

The original core text focused on specific environmental issues such as ‘fossil fuels’, which risked feeling limited. By using terms such as ‘environmental responsibility’ and ‘in harmony with nature’, we broaden the context to encompass our entire approach to the environment - from biodiversity (a particular challenge at the moment in status report 6) to sustainable resource use. This makes the text more inclusive and forward-looking: important in a time when debates such as wind power can divide rather than unite.

5 "Our vision" is about a shared aspiration where both society and the individual contribute to a sustainable future through their actions and choices.

Using ‘our vision’ instead of this vision creates a strong sense of ownership and participation. Where a ‘principle’ acts as guidance and structure, a ‘vision’ inspires long-term collaboration and personal investment. Here, the vision takes the form of a social contract - a mutual agreement between society and the individual where both parties take responsibility for jointly building a future characterized by sustainability, justice and community.

6 We 'nuture the conditions', not perfection in a rejected future.

Flourishing is based on realistic expectations and shared responsibility - creating conditions where each individual can grow and contribute in their own way.

To talk about creating conditions means to focus on the possible rather than the perfect. It is not about creating a utopian world but about shaping circumstances in which people can feel good, develop their gifts and contribute to society based on their unique circumstances. By acknowledging the complexity and variations of life, we show that flourishing does not require perfection, but a conscious and inclusive process in which both the individual and society have their share of responsibility.

7 At the same time, flourishing is a journey that is based on the individual's free will.

Flourishing is not something that can be handed over to others - it is an active responsibility that everyone must take for themselves and for their community.

At a time when many rely on others to solve problems - the state, organizations or anyone else - 'Everyone Can Flourish' reminds us that real change starts with ourselves. It is not something we can buy ourselves out of through taxes or delegate to others. Flourishing requires a conscious choice to contribute, to participate and to take responsibility for our actions. It is an ongoing process where each individual, through their choices and their commitment, builds both their own future and that of society.

8 Values such as trust, community, resilience, justice and identity are deeply rooted in the soul of Åland - they form the foundation of our common future. Our Åland fundamental values are non-negotiable.

In times of uncertainty and change, it is important that we hold on to the values that define us as a society. These values are not only benchmarks for what we strive for, but also a reminder of our responsibility to preserve and strengthen what makes us unique. They represent a social and cultural compass that guides us, regardless of the challenges or opportunities we face. Åland has always stood for cooperation, justice and respect, and these principles remain our firm foundation even as the world around us changes.

9 Flourishing is about sharing both successes and setbacks - to strengthen each other in difficult times and celebrate together when we succeed.

We are not alone in this journey. Our strength lies in community and in the realization that we are part of something bigger than ourselves. When we face challenges, we build resilience by supporting each other, and when we experience successes, our community deepens by celebrating together. It is this balance between individual and collective experiences that allows us to not only survive, but also thrive as a society. It reminds us that we all have a role to play, and that our actions, no matter how small, contribute to something greater.

10

‘A lifelong journey of growth and renewal” and “in every choice, every greeting, and in every act...” Lasting change happens through actions that are repeated and built upon over time, achieving a living practice.

Flourishing is about choosing over and over again what matters, even when it’s hard. It’s not enough to say yes to a vision or ideal once; it requires an ongoing commitment to prioritize and act on your values. Every step we take – every choice, encounter, and action – is an opportunity to renew our commitment to what truly matters. It’s not the grand gestures that create lasting change, but the daily, incremental process of consciously and consistently prioritizing and strengthening our values. Through this constant affirmation, flourishing becomes not just a goal, but a habit and a new reality.

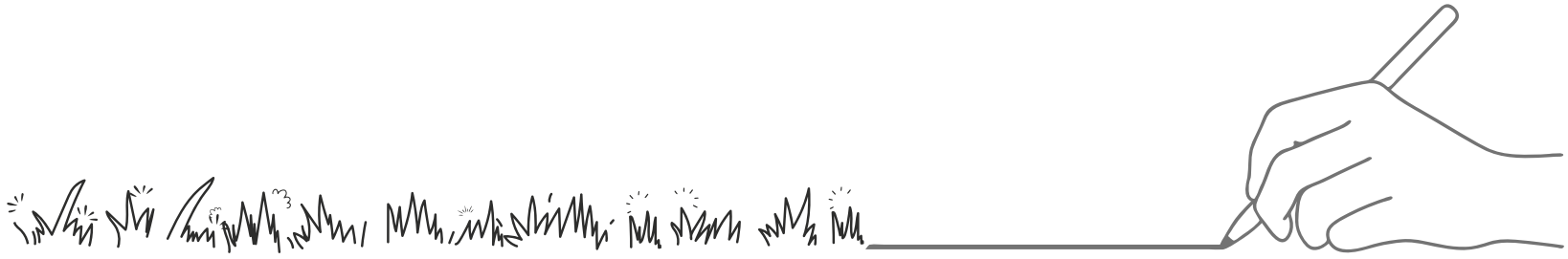
Illustrations make meaning visible and engaging

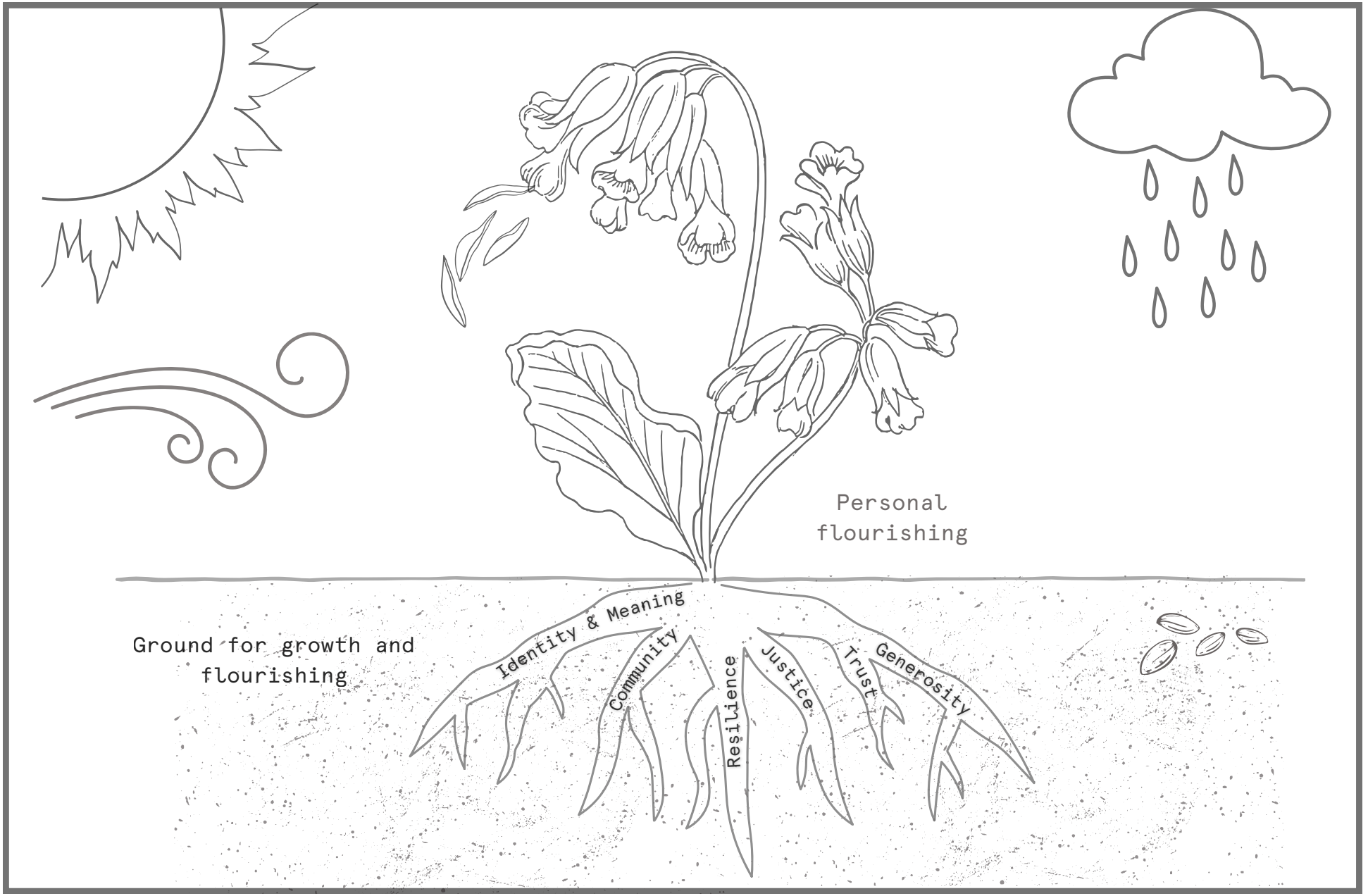
Words can build foundations, shape ideas, and point the way forward - but sometimes, something more is needed. A picture is worth a thousand words, not just because it conveys information, but because it evokes feeling and gives form to what we sense but cannot easily say. Illustrations help us see the whole - how values, actions, and outcomes are woven together to create the conditions for flourishing.

When this happens, the image becomes more than decoration. It becomes a tool for reflection and insight – a living part of the story. Through color, shape, and composition, illustrations make meaning visible. And in a world saturated with information, a clear, memorable image can cut through the noise and offer focus, anchoring abstract ideas in something tangible and emotionally resonant.

Just as importantly, illustrations invite reflection. They create pause points - moments where we not only take in information, but begin to feel its relevance in our own lives. These moments of resonance are where true engagement begins.

At their best, illustrations inspire, invite dialogue, and light the way forward. They help us see how the pieces of the vision connect and reinforce one another. And they offer everyone a way in – a way to find themselves in the bigger picture, and to see how even small steps can help bring the vision to life.




Personal
flourishing
Ground for growth and
flourishing
Identity & Meaning
Community
Resilience
Justice
Trust
Generosity

Insights for inner development and deeper understanding

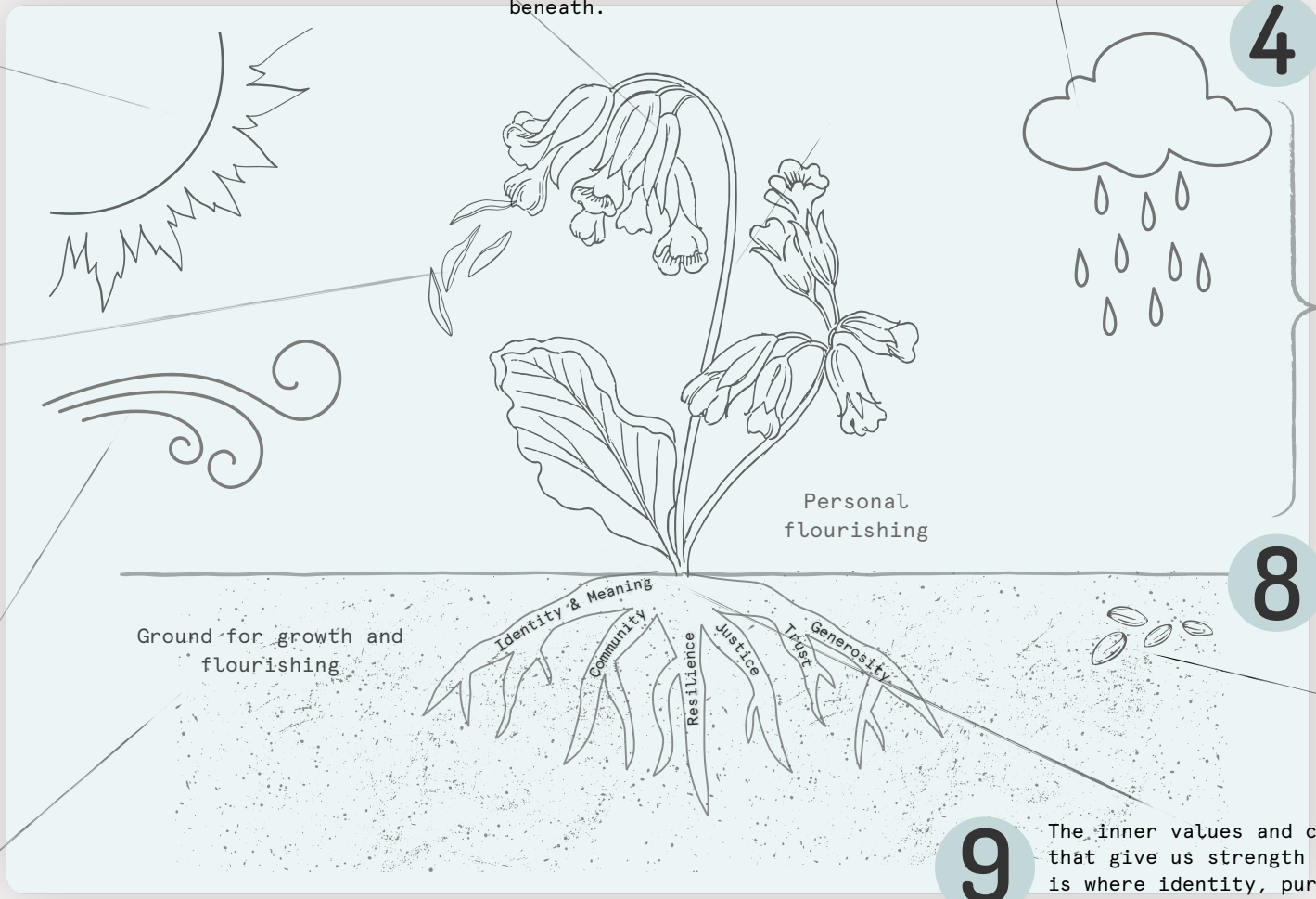
1 The sun symbolizes life's bright and joyful moments – sources of warmth, energy, and strength that help us grow.

2 The flower represents the visible expression of inner strength and outer support – nourished by deep roots and sustained by the ground beneath.

3 Rain brings the nourishment we need, even when it feels unwelcome. Life's challenges, like rain, make growth possible.

4 The natural landscape reflects the collective impact of our actions. Through our social, economic, cultural, and environmental efforts, we shape a sustainable world – one that supports both communities and personal flourishing.

5 The flower's petals represent the unique diversity of each individual. Just as no two flowers are alike, each person's contribution to our shared flourishing is distinct and irreplaceable.



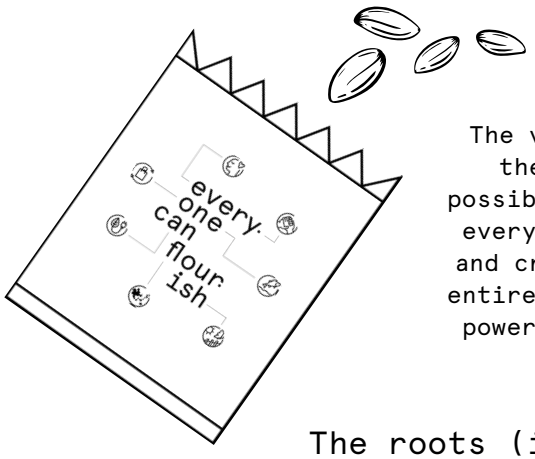
6 The wind reminds us that change is a constant in life – and a vital force for growth, movement, and adaptation.

7 The nourishing ground where everything begins. Here, sustainable social, economic, and environmental structures meet shared norms and values to create the conditions for reflection, growth, and flourishing. These external foundations stabilize and enrich our inner roots–supporting personal development and cultivating inner strength.

8 The vision "Everyone Can Flourish" is the seed that holds both idea and possibility – a core of potential where every individual can grow, contribute, and find meaning.

9 The inner values and character traits that give us strength and stability. This is where identity, purpose, community, resilience, justice, trust, and generosity take root. These qualities anchor us – and from them, we grow and flourish. Together, they form the foundation of our inner sustainability.

The elements of flourishing



Seed

The vision "Everyone Can Flourish" is the seed that holds both idea and possibility – a core of potential, where every individual can grow, contribute, and create meaning. From this seed, the entire vision takes root. It carries the power to turn vision into reality, and ideas into action.

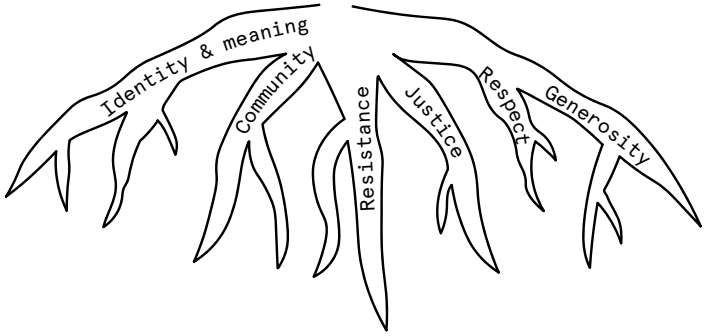
Soil

The soil represents the unseen yet essential foundation for growth – both the literal earth that sustains life, and the deeper cultural and ecological conditions that shape how we live together. It includes our shared planet and its resources, but also the grounding norms, traditions, and collective responsibilities that hold societies together across generations. The soil gives us stability and meaning – but it is often invisible, working quietly beneath the surface. It is what everything else depends on.

The roots (inner sustainability)

The roots in the illustration represent inner sustainability–the universal values that provide strength, stability, and nourishment to a thriving society. Just as roots anchor a plant in the soil and allow it to grow, these values – deeply rooted in Nordic ideals – form the foundation for human development and well-being.

The roots also mark the meeting point between inner life and outer conditions – the space where intention, values, and action begin to take hold. Though often invisible, they are essential. These roots form the quiet but powerful support system that upholds everything else in the illustration.

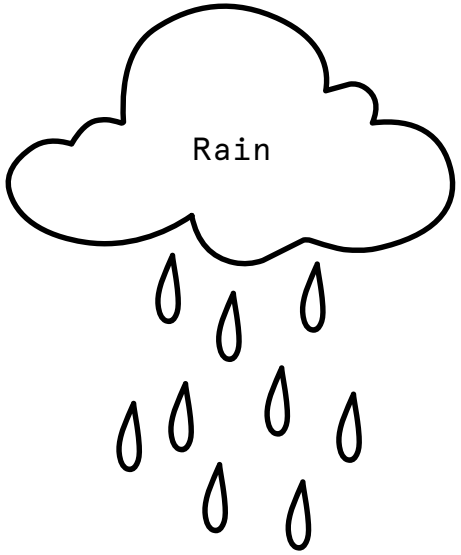


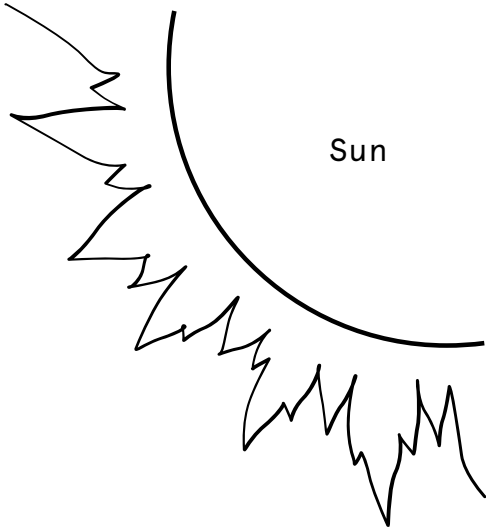
1. Trust: The foundation of relationships and collaboration. It creates security and makes shared progress possible.
2. Community: A sense of belonging and mutual support that strengthens individuals and weaves resilient communities.
3. Resilience: The capacity to face and recover from adversity – a strength that fortifies both individuals and societies.
4. Generosity: The willingness to give freely of one's time, resources, and care – without expecting anything in return.
5. Justice: The principle of fairness and equality that ensures everyone has the opportunity to flourish.
6. Identity & Meaning: By understanding who we are and what truly matters, we cultivate meaning and a stable sense of self. Identity and meaning are intertwined; shaped by our interests, strengths, and perspectives.

Seasons

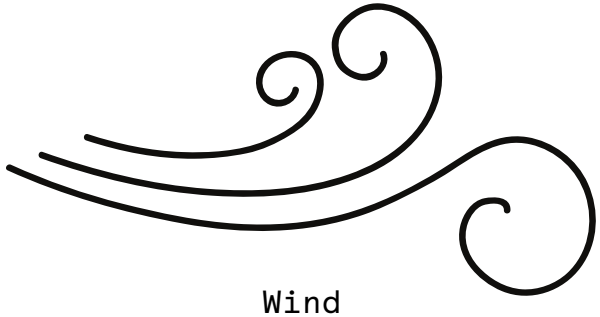
The phases of life call for both reflection and renewal – from trials (winter) to opportunities (spring). Like the weather, life is ever - changing, and each season plays a unique role in our journey. Winter invites rest and introspection, a time to pause, renew, and prepare for what lies ahead. Spring brings fresh energy and new beginnings. Summer celebrates flourishing and joy. Autumn offers space to harvest, reflect, and let go. In life's shifting seasons and circumstances, we come to know ourselves – what shapes us, what we carry, and what we're capable of becoming. A full life holds many seasons, and it is both the sunny and stormy days that shape our growth. The seasons remind us that light and dark, joy and struggle, all have their place in a meaningful, ever-evolving life.

Nourishment and support through life's necessary challenges. Rain may feel uncomfortable, but it strengthens and sustains us. The water symbolizes life's harder moments – those that teach us patience, perseverance, and creativity. It is in the rain that we are invited to pause, reflect, and develop the inner character that helps us grow stronger. Just as rain is vital to the earth, life's trials nourish our roots and shape the path ahead.





Inspiration, vision, and guidance – the light that shows the way forward and fills us with hope. The sun symbolizes the bright and joyful moments in life that give us strength to grow. It includes the warmth of relationships – family, friends, and others who bring joy and security – as well as the successes and opportunities that inspire us to keep moving. The sun reminds us of those luminous days when anything feels possible – when hope and inspiration fuel our ability to face everyday challenges and navigate life's larger storms.



Wind

The power of change and the invisible movement of life. The wind can both carry us forward and challenge our footing. A gentle breeze may bring new ideas and opportunities – changes that feel light and welcome. But strong winds and storms can shake us, urging us to reexamine our roots and refocus our direction. In the movement of the wind – whether subtle or sweeping – we find opportunities for renewal and growth. The wind reminds us that change is a constant companion, and a vital force in helping us adapt, evolve, and flourish.

Flower

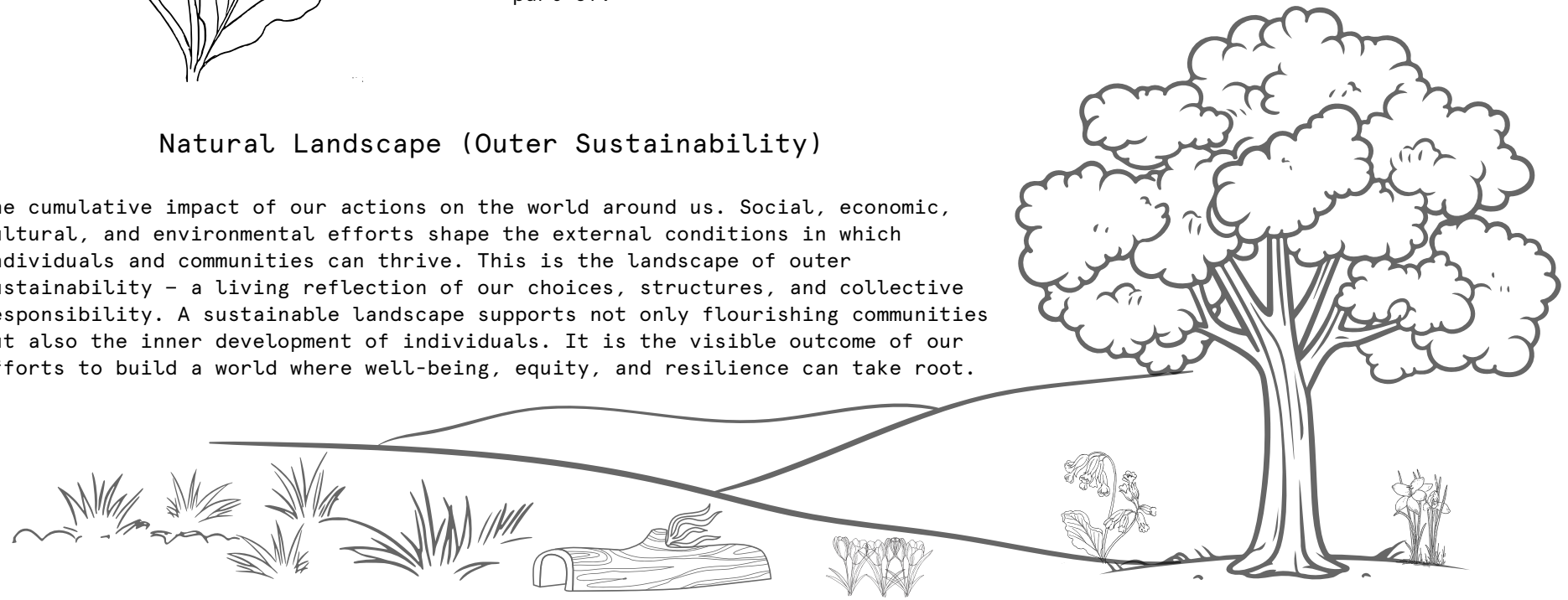
Personal flourishing symbolizes growth, creativity, and connection. The flower represents both beauty and impact – a reminder that people influence the world around them. It shows how inner development and outer engagement are intertwined: when we grow within, we contribute more fully to the communities we're part of.

Petals

The flower's petals symbolize the unique diversity within each individual. Just as no two flowers are alike, each person brings a distinct contribution to our shared flourishing. It is this diversity of perspectives and experiences that gives strength, richness, and beauty to the whole– together creating a thriving society where everyone has a place.

Natural Landscape (Outer Sustainability)

The cumulative impact of our actions on the world around us. Social, economic, cultural, and environmental efforts shape the external conditions in which individuals and communities can thrive. This is the landscape of outer sustainability – a living reflection of our choices, structures, and collective responsibility. A sustainable landscape supports not only flourishing communities but also the inner development of individuals. It is the visible outcome of our efforts to build a world where well-being, equity, and resilience can take root.



Metaphors make meaning visible

At first glance, images of flowers, roots, soil, and wind might seem like a poetic flourish – pleasant, but perhaps irrelevant. But metaphors are more than symbolic decoration; they are powerful tools for understanding complexity, building connection, and inspiring action.

In their influential book Metaphors We Live By (1980), linguists and philosophers George Lakoff and Mark Johnson demonstrate that metaphors are not just a way of speaking – they are central to how we think. By linking abstract ideas to familiar, concrete images, metaphors help us make sense of concepts that might otherwise feel distant or difficult to grasp.

For instance, when we say we are "building" a community, we are not referring to literal brickwork. Yet the metaphor helps us picture community as something that requires structure, cooperation, and care. Similarly, the image of a flower – growing from strong roots in nourishing ground – makes the vision "Everyone Can Flourish" more tangible. Each part of the flower, from the roots to the petals, represents different aspects of what is needed for individuals and societies to thrive.

But metaphors do more than explain. They anchor the vision in something that feels both deeply personal and collectively meaningful. In "Everyone Can Flourish", the roots symbolize not only values and support structures but also the living memory of Åland itself – its sense of community, shared responsibility, and care for people and nature.

When we speak of roots, we link the vision to identity, history, and belonging. Åland is about caring for one another, nurturing sustainable relationships, and creating space for everyone to grow. Tradition and renewal are not opposites – they nourish each other, just as roots give strength and life to the flower. Using the cowslip (Primula veris)– Åland's regional flower – reinforces the connection between vision and place. Its resilience and beauty reflect our shared story and values, and help us both understand and feel the connections that shape our future.

For further reading on the cognitive power of metaphor and its role in shaping thought, see the appendices.

How imagery in language helps us grasp complexity

The illustration for "Everyone Can Flourish" is grounded in well-established linguistic expressions that make the vision both universal and accessible. By drawing on idioms and figures of speech, we link abstract ideas to everyday experiences – like weather, seasons, and nature – imagery that resonates across cultures and contexts. How imagery works:

Universal themes: The symbolism of nature and weather is shared across the world. We all know the feeling of shifting winds, the challenges brought by rain, and the energy and hope carried by the sun.

Relatability: Imagery anchors complex ideas in concrete, familiar experiences – making them easier to understand and connect with.

Emotional connection: Expressions like "taking root" or "the winds of change" do more than explain – they activate emotion, insight, and memory, making the vision feel not only understandable but deeply human.

The wind alone shows the power of language

"A breath of fresh air" *(something refreshing, new, invigorating)*
"Wind in your sails" *(gaining momentum, support, or energy)*
"Catch the wind" *(seizing an opportunity, though sometimes used as futile)*
"It's windy at the top" *(being a leader can be challenging and vulnerable)*
"To set sail" *(to begin a journey, especially into something new)*
"Go where the wind takes you" *(going with the flow, embracing openness)*
"Take the wind out of someone's sails" *(to take away someone's power or motivation)*
"The winds of change" *(societal or personal ranformation on the horizon)*
"Blown off course" *(disrupted plans or unexpected change)*
"Sailing close to the wind" *(taking risks, pushing boundaries)*
"Shift with the wind" *(adaptability, through sometimes implies inconsistency)*
"Whistling in the wind" *(trying something futile or ignoring reality)*
"Against the wind" *(persevering despite opposition)*
"Like a leaf in the wind" *(to be without direction or easily influenced by others)*

English idioms by place

"the wind told me..." (US, appalachian) *(winds as carriers of ancestral memory)*
"as changeable as the wind" (GB) *(common metaphor for unpredictability)*
"gone with the wind" (US) *(vanished without a trace)*
"dust in the wind" (US) *(life's transience)*
"whistling wind" (GB) *(evokes loneliness, desolation)*
"to throw caution to the wind" (US) *(to act recklessly or boldiy)*
"to ride the wind" (GB) *(daring or free-spirited behavior)*
"to blow hot or cold" (GB) *(to be inconsistent or indecisive)*
"to get wind of something" (US) *(to learn of something secretly or indirectly)*
"riding out the wind" (CA) *(prairie usage for enduring hardship)*
"catching the wind" (IN) *(chasing unstable political or economic trends)*
"gone with the willy-willy" (AU) *(vanishing suddenly or recklessly)*
"windchill" (CA) *(culturally loaded technical term for emotional distance)*
"hot wind" (IN) *(gossip, unrest, or social instability)*

Summary: “The Illustration of Human Flourishing” – Connecting Inner and Outer Growth

“The Illustration of Human Flourishing” offers a holistic view of how roots, soil, weather, seasons, and petals work together to support personal growth. It plays a central role in the narrative and highlights the importance of balancing inner and outer dimensions in a sustainable life.

The illustration shows that human flourishing is both a goal in itself and part of something larger. It helps identify key elements that contribute to well-being and growth.

The choice of the cowslip (Primula veris) ties the vision to the Åland Islands. A beloved symbol in Nordic nature, it represents the balance between inner development and external sustainability. In this context, the environment – both social and ecological – shapes and supports individuals and communities as they grow together toward shared flourishing.

Practical applications

Self-reflection: Guiding questions that help individuals explore their roots and clarify the values that support personal growth.

Community Actions: Dialogue forums and practical tools that foster trust, strengthen participation, and encourage open, inclusive conversations.

Immerse with Story: Share relatable narratives of individuals or communities who have faced challenges and grown stronger – always linked back to the vision “Everyone Can Flourish.”

Policy and practice: How institutions – such as the the Government of Åland, municipalities, and associations – can use the map as a foundation for programs, strategies, and concrete initiatives.

The reflection questions on the next page are designed to:

- Deepen self-awareness by exploring core values (roots): Example: “Which of your roots feel strongest right now?”
- Inspire personal growth and community connection: Example: “How can you strengthen your relationship with the community around you?”
- Encourage dialogue to build shared understanding and trust: Example: “What can you do to better understand how someone else sees a certain situation or challenge?”
- Support resilience during challenging times (bad weather or difficult seasons) Example: “What helps you stay grounded during periods of adversity?”

To make the vision more practical, a workbook or exercise sheet can be included in the toolkit for use in dialogue meetings and other activities.

Rooted Reflection – Questions for Growth and Insight

Trust

- Who do you trust most in your life, and why?
- How can you deepen trust in your relationships – and build it with people you don't yet know?
- In what ways does trust influence your sense of safety and your willingness to take risks?

Community

- In what ways do you feel connected to something larger than yourself?
- What can you contribute to help strengthen your community's sense of cohesion?
- How can you create space for others to feel included, seen, and heard?

Resilience

- What challenges have you faced, and what have they taught you?
- How do you recover from setbacks, and what helps you grow stronger through them?
- How can you support others in finding strength during difficult times?

Generosity

- What does generosity mean to me, and how do I express it in everyday life?
- When was the last time I received someone's generosity, and how did it affect me?
- How do I balance being generous with honoring my own needs and boundaries?

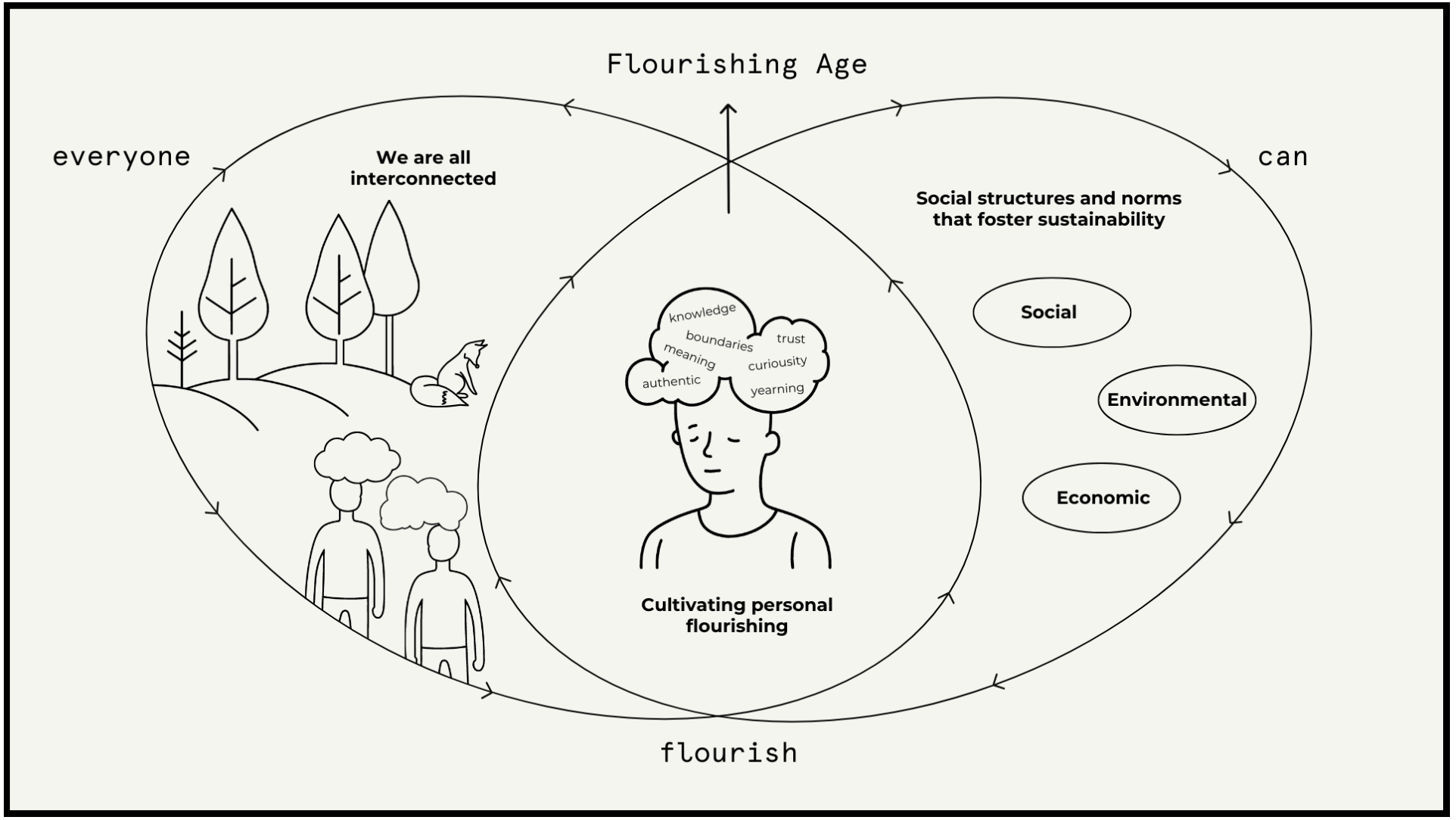
Justice

- What does justice mean to you, and where do you see it – or not see it–in your daily life?
- What injustices do you feel called to change, and what's one step you can take?
- How can you foster justice in the relationships and communities you're part of?

Identity & Meaning

- How do you define yourself, and which parts of your identity are most important to you?
- How has your identity developed over time, and what factors have shaped it?
- What do you want others to know about you, and how can you express your identity in an authentic way?
- What gives your life meaning and purpose, and how can you bring more of it into your daily life?
- What actions can you take to contribute to something larger than yourself?

Everyone Can Flourish – A Holistic Illustration of Growth and Connection



Insights that highlight deepening and development

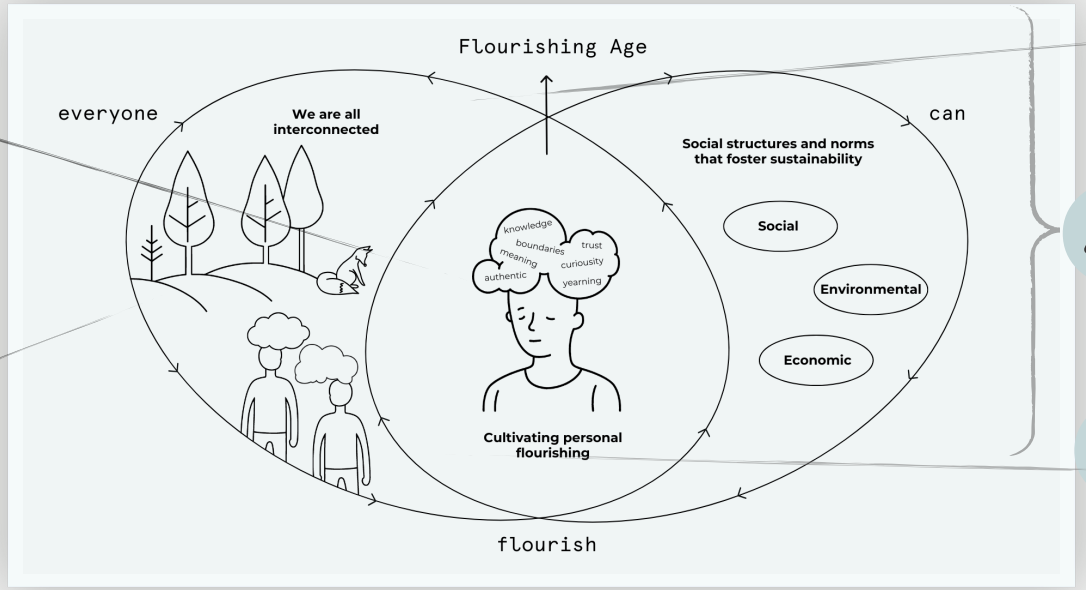
With an understanding of how individuals flourish through their roots, the soil, the weather, the seasons, and their unique petals, the holistic illustration offers a broader perspective: that personal well-being – feeling good deep down – is inextricably connected to nature, societal structures, and shared norms. It shows that the vision embraces both the individual and the collective, and how these dimensions interact and reinforce one another.

The illustration helps us see how individual well-being is shaped by, and in turn shapes, the systems and goals we hold in common.

Building on insights from the flourishing illustration, this holistic view places the individual in a larger context where relationships, social systems, and the natural world intersect. It highlights how norms and structures – together with the environment and human connection – shape both personal and collective development, and how individual actions contribute to shared outcomes. It highlights:

1 Relationships: The connections between people – and how they foster trust, belonging, and progress toward shared goals.

2 The Environment: Nature's role – and our relationship to it – in shaping a sustainable future.



3 Illustrates the path toward a flourishing future – and the importance of collaboration and shared goals in realizing the vision.

4 Social structures and norms: How systems and rules support or limit individual development.

5 The Individual: An active part of the social and natural ecosystem, where every action shapes the whole. Well-being emerges from balancing inner life with the world around us.

Illustrations that inspire action and change

The holistic illustration and the flourishing illustration are key tools for communicating the vision "Everyone Can Flourish." These visuals help us understand how individual well-being, in interaction with nature and society, forms the foundation for both personal and collective flourishing. The six roots - such as identity, trust, and community - strengthen the connection between individual values and the external world.

The seven steps, outlined in the next section, trace a path from reflection and awareness to action and sustainable development. The illustrations make this connection easier to grasp and help bring the vision to life. They also lay the groundwork for future illustrations that can inspire action and guide individuals and groups through the seven-step journey toward flourishing.

Imagining the six roots in images

Identity and Meaning

Illustration idea: A solitary flower emerging from a cracked rock, its roots reaching deep into the earth while its petals begin to open toward the light. This symbolizes how identity can offer stability and purpose—even in difficult conditions.

Message: "Understanding who you are, and what gives your life meaning, is the foundation for personal flourishing and a clear sense of direction."

Trust

Illustration idea: A network of roots interconnecting several trees, symbolizing mutual support and shared strength.
Message: "Trust is the foundation of strong relationships and a thriving community."

Resilience

Illustration idea: Roots winding around rocks and obstacles, symbolizing resilience, adaptation, and inner strength.
Message: "Adversity can become a source of growth and strength."

Justice

Illustration idea: Roots distributing nourishment evenly through the soil, symbolizing fairness, balance, and shared opportunity.
Message: "Justice creates the conditions for everyone to grow and flourish."

Generosity

Illustration idea: Roots intertwined with those of nearby trees, sharing nourishment to symbolize mutual generosity and interconnected care.
Message: "Generosity nurtures community and builds lasting trust."

Community

Illustration idea: A vibrant garden filled with diverse flowers—each one unique in color and shape, growing side by side to form a harmonious and thriving whole.

Message: "Each person adds their own beauty. Together, we create a community stronger and more vibrant than anything we could build alone."

To create real change, we must ask ourselves: What holds us back? What barriers can we name—and overcome – together? How do we turn ideas into action and build the conditions for flourishing, both within ourselves and in the world around us?

The illustrations must speak to these real questions – and help spark the solutions we need.

Ideas for illustrations

1

"Illustration about personal flourishing and roots" (Self-insight and Six values) p.16-17, White Paper

Description: The flower represents the individual's external development and the values that the roots nourish. The combination of the flower and the seed visualizes how personal flourishing begins with inner sustainability.

Purpose: To help individuals reflect on their inner values and self-awareness. This step illuminates the foundation for personal flourishing by exploring the hidden "roots" that provide stability and nourishment.

Key message: "Personal flourishing begins with understanding, anchoring, and deepening your roots and values."

2

"Illustration about self-reflection, perspective and landscape" (Self-reflection and Perspective in interaction with one's surroundings)

Illustration idea: Soil with layers symbolizing different aspects of identity - such as experiences, challenges, values ("roots") and prejudices - where each layer contributes to a deeper understanding and nourishment for growth. The illustration is complemented by a scenic landscape in the background, which emphasizes the connection between the individual's reflection and the external environment.

Purpose: Explore how an individual's background, experiences, and identity shape their worldview and commitment to change.

Key message: "Our background, our experiences, and the environment we find ourselves in shape us, but reflection gives us the opportunity to understand these influences and act in new ways."

3

"Illustration about deep roots and relationships" (Self-awareness and Connectedness)

Illustration idea: Several flowers in nature with roots spreading through the earth and intertwining with other roots, representing community, relationships and shared values.

Purpose: Emphasize the importance of building strong roots through self-reflection and understanding connections to others.

Key message: "Deep roots anchor us and connect us to the whole."

Ideas for illustrations

4

"Illustration: A flower that withstands life's trials" (Challenges and Resilience)

Illustration idea: A flower that stands firm despite strong winds, with flexible stems and roots deeply rooted in the rich soil, symbolizing how we can withstand the storms of life and find strength even in adversity.

Purpose: Address obstacles and challenges that hinder growth, while promoting resilience and adaptability.

Key message: "Adversity shapes us, even when the wind blows the hardest. It is the roots we have built that can give us the strength to stand firm, to withstand the storms of life, and to continue growing."

5

"Illustration about growing and flourishing towards the light" (Actions and Purpose)

Illustration idea: A plant reaching up towards the sun, with petals beginning to bloom and new leaves unfurling. The light can symbolize shared ambitions or guiding principles, while the bloom represents the actions and results that contribute to the whole.

Purpose: Inspire action and show the way forward as individuals and societies strive towards their goals.

Key message: "Growth happens when we reach out towards our ambitions together, especially when we have the light of others to guide us towards a common goal and purpose."

6

"The Illustration of Flourishing Fully" (Individual and Collective Flourishing)

Illustration idea: Several flowers in nature with roots spreading through the earth and intertwining with other roots, representing community, relationships and shared values.

Purpose: To demonstrate the realization of potential, both individual and collective, in a thriving society.

Key message: "When we flourish as individuals, we help everyone flourish."

7

"The Illustration of Sowing New Seeds" (Sustainability and Heritage)

Illustration idea: A flower that scatters seeds in the wind, with some landing in fertile soil. This can symbolize mentorship, community building, or long-term planning.

Purpose: Emphasize the cyclical nature of growth and the importance of giving back and ensuring sustainability.

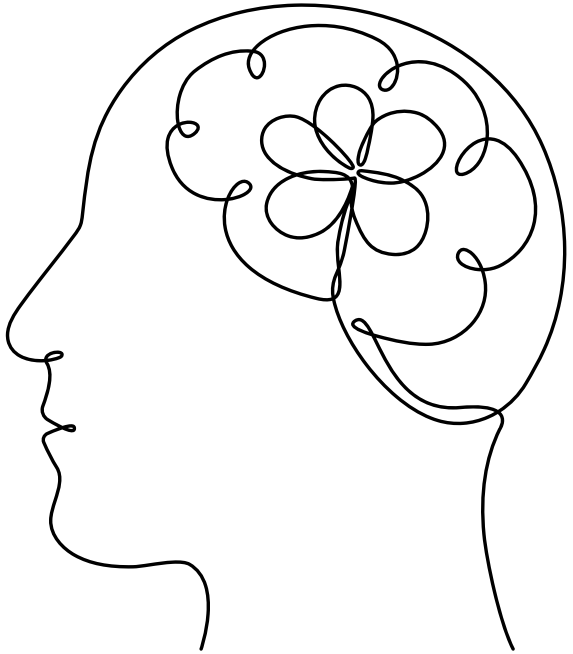
Key message: "Every journey of blossoming plants seeds for future growth."

By visualizing the process of flourishing – from strong roots to supportive communities and shared resources – the illustration shows that every step matters. It reminds us that we don’t need to change everything at once. Small, intentional actions can have a powerful impact, and it is often these everyday steps that lead to lasting change in society.

The image also emphasizes that flourishing doesn’t happen on its own. It takes intention, effort, and choice. This reinforces a sense of agency: we are not passive recipients of life, but active cultivators of our own growth – and contributors to the well-being of our communities.

A shared starting point for collaboration

Creating a field guide for inner sustainability is an inspiring idea – one that invites us to explore our inner landscape much like we discover the natural world around us. Such a guide can offer tools and exercises for self-reflection, mindfulness, and emotional intelligence. Through nature metaphors, we learn to tend our inner life with the same care we bring to a garden.



Inner sustainability is about cultivating self-compassion, balance, and resilience. By identifying our internal resources – and becoming aware of what energizes or depletes us – we can shape an inner environment that supports long-term well-being.

In meetings, workshops, or educational settings, the guide can spark deeper conversations about personal and collective sustainability. When we share our experiences, we build a sense of community that supports each other’s inner growth. And as we learn to understand and honor our own feelings and needs, we become more capable of navigating life’s challenges – together.

Measuring flourishing

To realize a sustainable vision where "Everyone Can Flourish", we need clear methods for measuring progress and impact. Robust measurement not only shows how well we are reaching our goals – it also helps identify where further effort is needed.

Harvard University's Flourishing Scale provides a scientifically grounded and well-established model for assessing both personal and societal well-being. Its strength lies in its holistic approach, combining individual and collective dimensions to offer a balanced understanding of flourishing.
The model outlines a structured framework that captures physical, emotional, and social well-being – while also including deeper aspects such as meaning, purpose, and character development.

What does flourishing look like—and how do we measure it?

Flourishing metrics are indicators that allow for the measurement of well-being and development in a holistic way. The Harvard model focuses on six main areas that form the basis of flourishing:

1. Mental and Physical Health: Self-reported physical and mental well-being
2. Happiness & Life Satisfaction: How happy and satisfied a person feels with life overall
3. Close Social Relationships: The strength, trust, and support found in personal relationships.
4. Financial & Material Security: Having the resources needed to meet basic needs and plan for the future.
5. Meaning & Purpose: A sense that life is meaningful, purposeful, and direction-driven.
6. Character & Virtue: The presence of moral strengths like honesty, compassion, and self-discipline

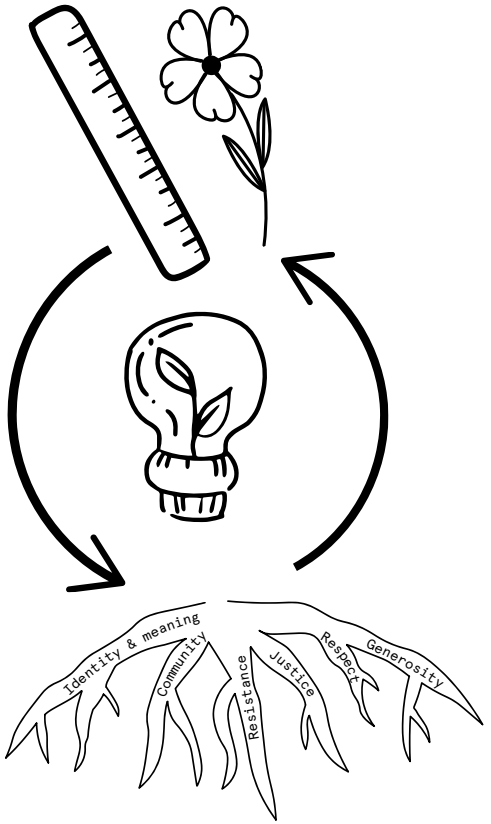
Please note: These terms correspond to the terminology used by ÅSUB in the "Trust Study for Åland" 2022

Flourishing is a multifaceted process that includes both individual and societal dimensions. By measuring flourishing, we can:

- Track progress: Understand how efforts and strategies contribute to meaningful improvement.
- Identify barriers: Pinpoint where individuals or groups face challenges in flourishing.
- Inspire action: Tangible results can motivate broader participation and build momentum for change.
- Ensure accountability: Clear metrics allow organizations and communities to track progress and uphold their commitments.

Connecting flourishing metrics to the roots

The six dimensions of flourishing identified by Harvard–mental and physical health, life satisfaction, social relationships, economic stability, meaning, and character – naturally align with the six roots of "Everyone Can Flourish".



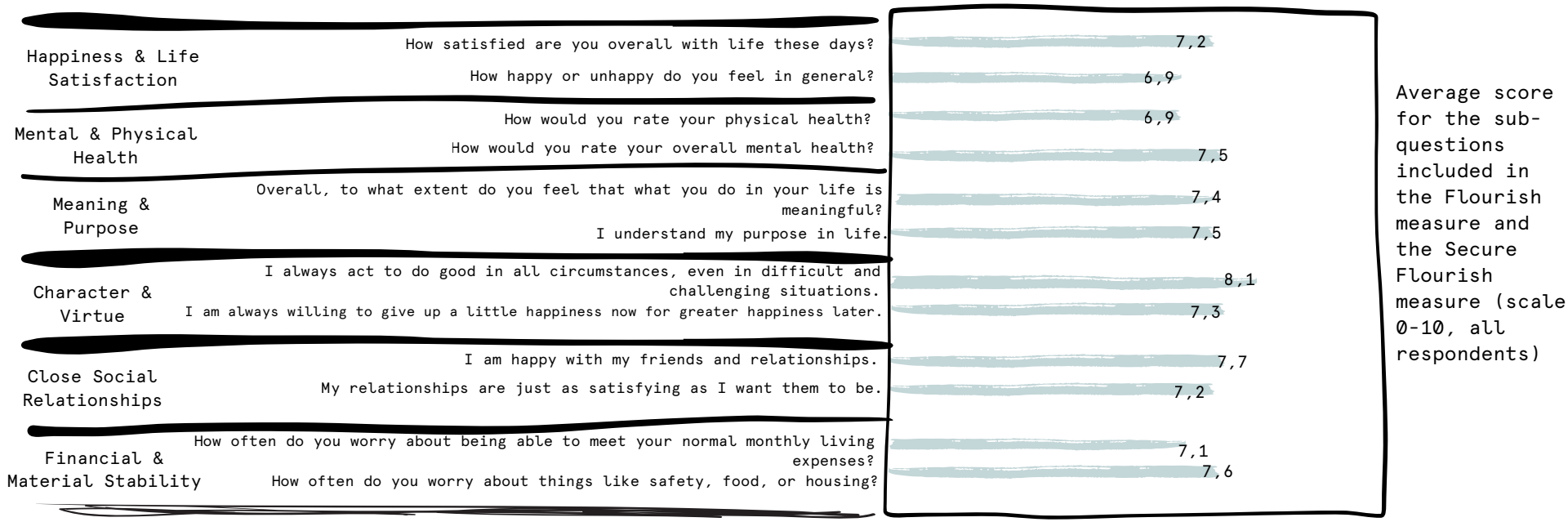
- Identity and Meaning reflect both Character and Virtue and Meaning and Purpose, as self-awareness and a sense of direction provide inner stability.
- Community aligns with Close Social Relationships, emphasizing connection, belonging, and mutual support.
- Resilience overlaps with Character and Virtue and contributes to Mental Health, by cultivating strength in the face of adversity.
- Justice promotes Life Satisfaction and Close Social Relationships, by fostering fairness, inclusion, and social trust.
- Trust strengthens Close Social Relationships and supports Mental Health, by nurturing mutual respect, safety, and responsibility.
- Generosity contributes to both Financial and Material Stability and Close Social Relationships, by encouraging reciprocity, resource sharing, and community care.

What does flourishing look like on Åland?

The latest data from Status Report 6 (p. 17, December 3, 2024) offers a measurable snapshot of flourishing in Åland. Harvard University's Flourish and Secure Flourish indices have only been measured once to date, but the results reveal a clear pattern: flourishing increases with age, with the highest scores reported among individuals aged 60 and above.

At the same time, two factors show a statistically significant negative impact on flourishing: unemployment and economic deterioration. Individuals who have been unemployed for at least three months in the past five years, or who have experienced worsening economic conditions in the past year, report notably lower Secure Flourish values.

This aligns with previous research confirming the strong link between economic security and the experience of flourishing. It is therefore essential to include economic variables in future analyses. Increases in flourishing are also connected to Goal 2: Trust and Participation and to ongoing work for economic equality, where the GINI coefficient remains a key indicator.


Happiness & Life Satisfaction
How satisfied are you overall with life these days?
7,2
How happy or unhappy do you feel in general?
6,9
Mental & Physical Health
How would you rate your physical health?
6,9
How would you rate your overall mental health?
7,5
Meaning & Purpose
Overall, to what extent do you feel that what you do in your life is meaningful?
7,4
I understand my purpose in life.
7,5
Character & Virtue
I always act to do good in all circumstances, even in difficult and challenging situations.
8,1
I am always willing to give up a little happiness now for greater happiness later.
7,3
Close Social Relationships
I am happy with my friends and relationships.
7,7
My relationships are just as satisfying as I want them to be.
7,2
Financial & Material Stability
How often do you worry about being able to meet your normal monthly living expenses?
7,1
How often do you worry about things like safety, food, or housing?
7,6
Average score for the sub-questions included in the Flourish measure and the Secure Flourish measure (scale 0-10, all respondents)

Designing an effective evaluation system

By integrating these elements into the evaluation system, we create space to recognize and value each individual's unique contributions and lived experiences. This, in turn, fosters a more dynamic and inclusive learning environment – one that genuinely aligns with and reinforces the pedagogy we aim to support. Below are some possible components we could consider implementing:

1. Outcome indicators: Identify and, where necessary, develop tailored indicators to measure both individual and collective progress. These may include shifts in attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors related to the discussion topics – such as trust in government and institutions, perceptions of corruption, or levels of social engagement. Several of these dimensions are already being explored by ÅSUB. However, to identify potential gaps and deepen understanding of Åland's unique challenges and opportunities, additional studies could be commissioned.

2. Measurable objectives: Define clear, measurable objectives for each workshop, directly linked to the seven steps and six roots. These objectives provide clarity on expected outcomes and form a solid foundation for meaningful evaluation and continuous improvement.

3. Self-assessment: Provide participants with tools – such as surveys and reflective journals – to help them track progress and structure insights. These tools support self-understanding by highlighting strengths, revealing areas for growth, and encouraging ongoing development.

4. Group feedback: Create structured opportunities for participants to give and receive feedback through facilitated discussions or feedback circles that ensure all voices are heard. This fosters openness, mutual respect, and a collaborative atmosphere.

5. Observational evaluation: Involve external observers or facilitators to offer objective feedback on group dynamics and processes. Their insights can reveal how effectively co-creation and collaboration are functioning.

6. Follow-up: Schedule follow-up sessions that allow participants to revisit their goals and reflect on progress over time. This reinforces continuity, deepens learning, and sustains engagement.

Advancing evaluation and metrics

To integrate the measurement of flourishing into practical work, the following are proposed:

1. Training and dialogue meetings: Use workshops to introduce key stakeholders to guidance and tools for measuring flourishing, linking these metrics to Åland's vision and local context. Identify and train ambassadors in line with the "Everyone Can Flourish": Activity and Communication Plan.

2. Data collection: Collaborate with ÅSUB as needed to gather statistics and design surveys and interviews that capture both individual and societal dimensions of flourishing.

3. Annual status reporting: The Development and Sustainability Agenda for Åland already publishes annual status reports, with the most recent – Status Report 6 – released on 3 December 2024. To deepen future reporting, the next two editions could include a special focus on the inner dimensions of flourishing. By highlighting factors such as perceived meaning, resilience, and social well-being, we can offer a more holistic view of Åland's progress toward its vision of sustainability and human flourishing.

4. Create synergies with democracy-enhancing initiatives: The Government of Åland is already advancing democratic engagement through its ongoing promotion programme. By strengthening cooperation between this and related initiatives, we can further boost citizen participation and trust in political and social systems. Linking flourishing metrics to these efforts ensures that initiatives are not only measurable, but also meaningful.

5. Integrating inner sustainability into community planning: Embed methods that support individual growth within broader strategies for sustainable community development.

Creating an environment that supports flourishing is key to strengthening both individual and collective well-being. This means increasing awareness and deepening understanding of the factors that enable human flourishing – while also identifying and removing the barriers that hinder it. Through participation and collaboration, we can cultivate a culture of shared growth and co-create a sustainable, meaningful future for all in Åland.

Guidance, Tools, and Practices

Despite ambitious political reforms, expansive social programs, and a growing focus on sustainability, results often fall short. Why?

Because real change isn't just about structures, systems, or policies – it's about people. Individuals uphold society, shape its values, and steer its direction. In today's complex world, we must understand how norms and institutions shape us, while also honoring the uniqueness of human experience and need.

Yet working with people is the hardest part. It requires courage, patience, and deep insight into what truly drives us. Inner sustainability is the missing piece in the sustainability puzzle. It means strengthening people from within – cultivating self-awareness, resilience, purpose, and belonging. Systems provide structure, but it's through relationships and inner growth that these structures gain meaning and momentum.

At their core, social systems are the sum of individual choices. So if we imagine Åland society as an "organization," could the very principles that guide organizational transformation also apply to individuals?

Translating Systems into Human Change

In an era shaped by global crises–climate change, growing social inequality, and declining trust in institutions – we face a fundamental question: How do we create real change? Experience shows that meaningful, lasting change – especially on the inner level – requires more than inspiring principles or well-intentioned materials. It calls for a method, a pedagogy, that provides structure, clarity, and psychological safety throughout the process.

For many, the concept of inner sustainability remains abstract. But with a clear, step-by-step model, it becomes possible to turn insight into action. Lessons from the business world support this: proven methods often make the difference. One such method is the change model developed by Harvard Business School professor John Kotter. Used for nearly two decades by Fortune 500 companies, governments, and nonprofit organizations worldwide, Kotter's model has become a gold standard in change management – translating vision into action and helping organizations navigate complexity through clear, practical guidance.

This is where a process like Kotter's becomes invaluable: it clarifies not just what needs to happen, but how – a crucial distinction in a Nordic context, where pragmatism and clear structures are deeply valued. By offering a structured guide, we make change more accessible and actionable in a culture that prefers concrete steps over abstraction or introspection.

We know that individuals shape society – not just the other way around. By engaging the inner world – strengthening self-awareness, resilience, and belonging – we ignite change that radiates outward. With the right tools and guidance, people become catalysts. A chain reaction begins – reshaping systems and reinforcing the fabric of society. This isn't just a theory; it's a practical, human-centered approach to building a more sustainable and flourishing future.

Kotter's 8 steps for change

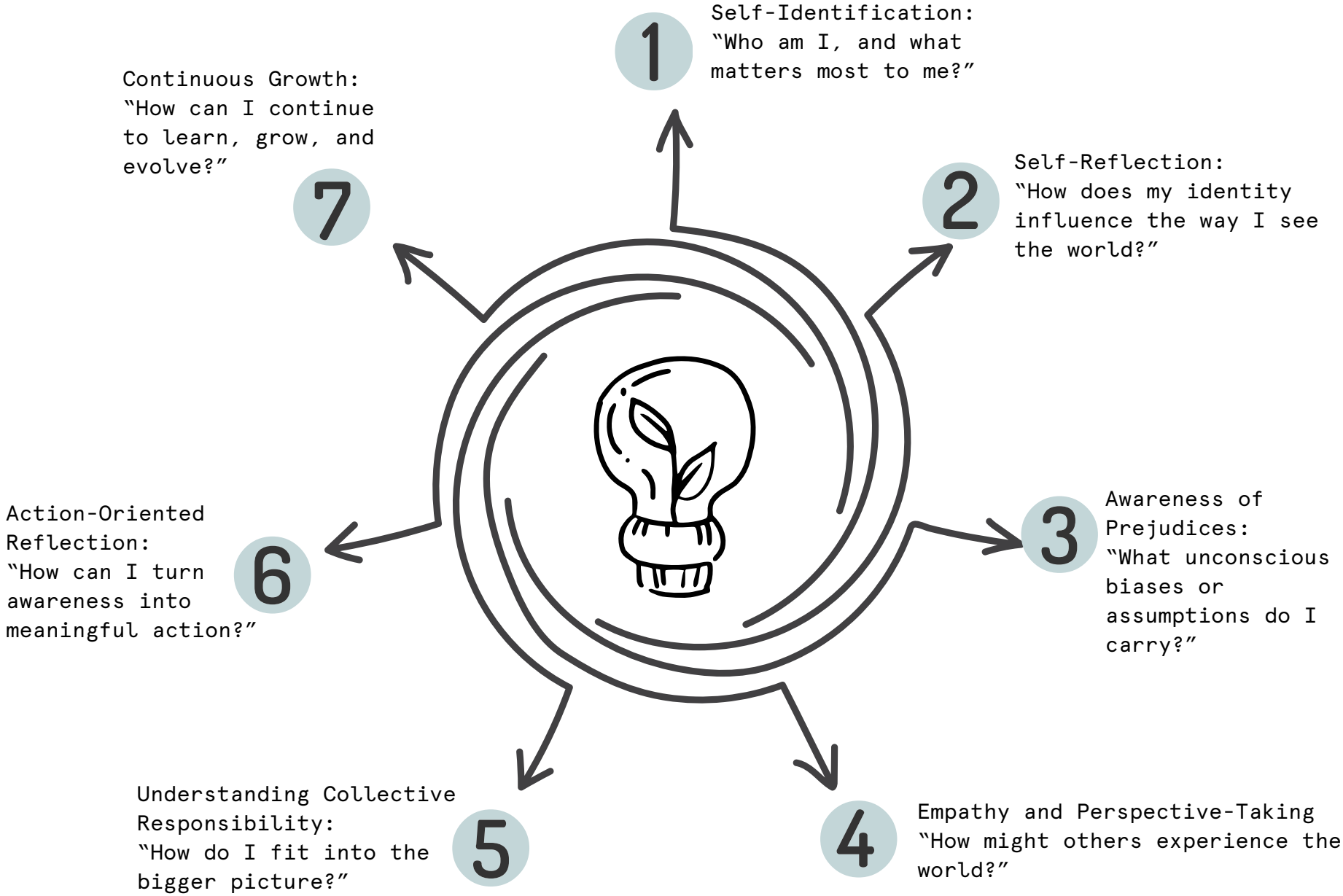
1. *Create a sense of urgency*
2. *Build a guiding coalition*
3. *Develop a shared vision and strategy*
4. *Communicate the vision clearly and widely*
5. *Remove obstacles and enable action*
6. *Celebrate early wins*
7. *Build momentum and deepen the change*
8. *Anchor the new ways in culture and practice*

From 8 step change method to 7 step guidance for inner sustainability

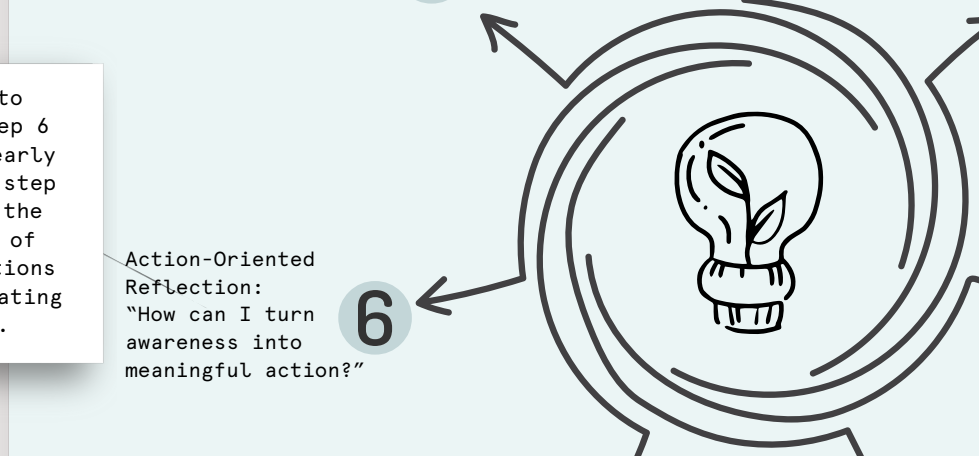
Kotter's method is invaluable as a proven framework for driving change at the organizational level. However, to make it meaningful for individuals and communities in Åland, we have adapted and reinterpreted its core principles to better reflect the unique challenge of inner sustainability. This adapted model also draws on broader developments in the field of inner development, where the focus lies on self-awareness, emotional growth, and collective responsibility. By integrating these insights with Kotter's structure, we have developed a seven-step framework for both personal and collective transformation.

While Kotter's model emphasizes systems, organization, and execution, our seven steps center the individual's journey. They are designed to cultivate self-awareness, foster empathy and mutual understanding, and strengthen the connection between individuals and the society they help shape. In this way, the model becomes more than a change management tool – it becomes a pedagogy for making sustainability a lived practice.

A 7-Step Guide to Inner Change



A reinterpretation of Kotter’s steps through the lens of inner sustainability



1 Self-Identification: “Who am I, and what matters most to me?”

Corresponds to Kotter's Step 1 (Create a sense of urgency). Self-awareness provides a fundamental sense of need and motivation to change.

2 Self-Reflection: “How does my identity influence the way I see the world?”

Building on Kotter's Step 2 (Build a Guiding Coalition) and Step 3 (Develop a shared vision and strategy), the reflection creates insight into how identity and values shape one's ability to collaborate and create a vision.

3 Awareness of Prejudices: “What unconscious biases or assumptions do I carry?”

Connects to Kotter's Step 5 (Remove obstacles and enable action). By identifying and addressing biases, barriers to collaboration and action are removed.

4 Empathy and Perspective-Taking “How might others experience the world?”

Relates to Kotter's Step 4 (Communicate the vision clearly and widely). Empathy and understanding make it possible to communicate and create engagement in a meaningful way.

5 Understanding Collective Responsibility: “How do I fit into the bigger picture?”

Aligns with Kotter's Step 3 (Develop a shared vision and strategy) and Step 7 (Build momentum and deepen the change). Accountability builds the bridge between individual actions and collective success.

6 Action-Oriented Reflection: “How can I turn awareness into meaningful action?”

Connects to Kotter's Step 6 (Celebrate early wins). This step emphasizes the importance of concrete actions and demonstrating progress.

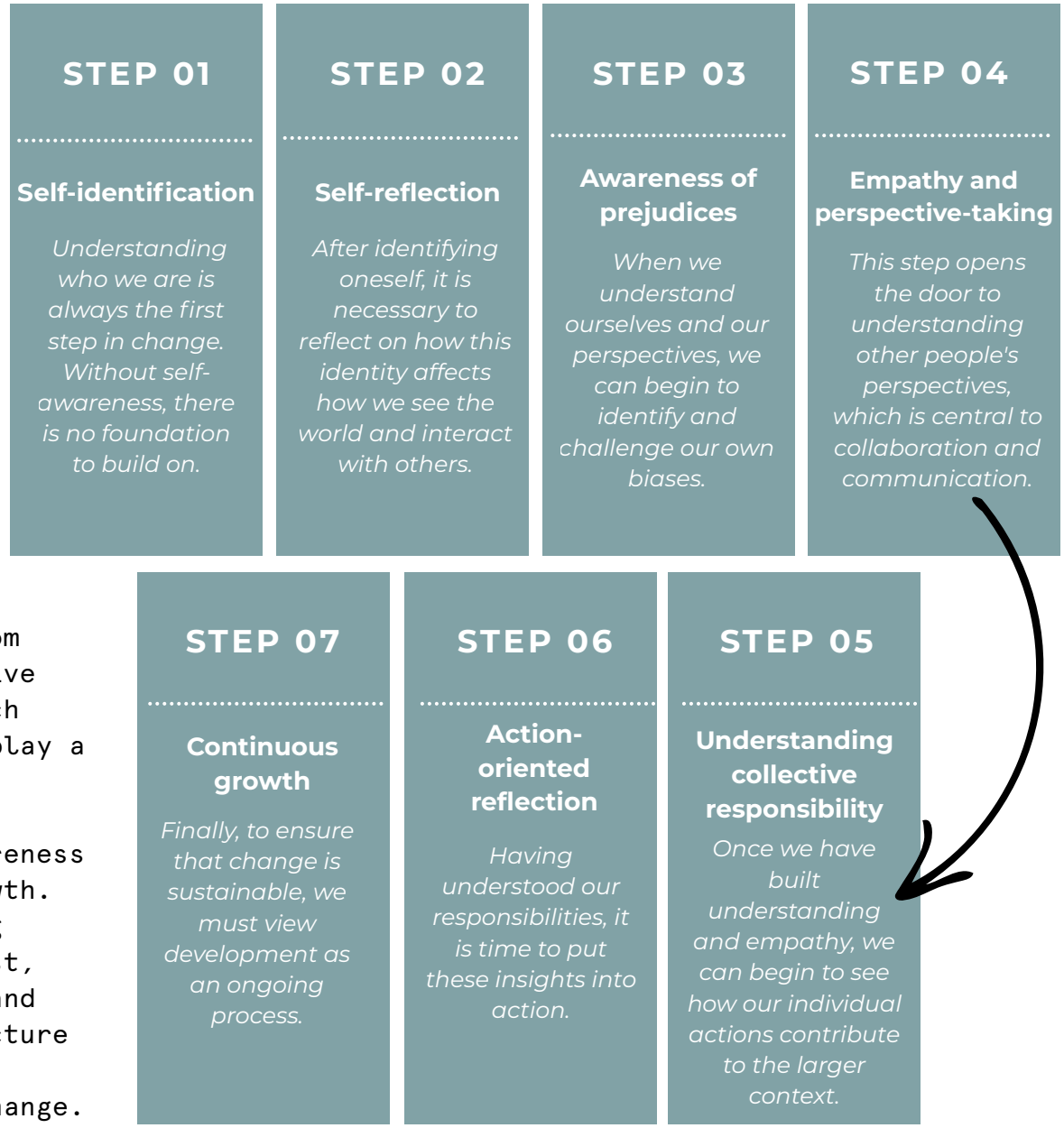
7 Continuous Growth: “How can I continue to learn, grow, and evolve?”

Reflects Kotter's Step 8 (Anchor the new ways in culture and practice). Through continuous development and reflection, long-term sustainability is ensured.

Rationale Behind the 7-Step Model

The order of the White Paper steps is intentionally structured to support a clear, logical development process that guides an individual's inner journey toward sustainability and flourishing. This journey begins with the foundation: understanding who you are and what motivates you on a personal level. It then moves toward insight into how your identity shapes your worldview and influences your interactions with others.
By examining and challenging personal biases, you take the next step toward empathy and perspective-taking – essential for cultivating a deeper understanding of the world around us. From this foundation grows a sense of collective responsibility – the realization that each person's actions matter and that we all play a role in shaping a flourishing society.

The final steps focus on translating awareness into action and embracing continuous growth. This is not a linear path, but a lifelong journey where each step builds on the last, creating the conditions for individuals and communities to thrive together. The structure offers clear direction while inspiring reflection, collaboration, and lasting change.


STEP 01
Self-identification
Understanding who we are is always the first step in change. Without self-awareness, there is no foundation to build on.
STEP 02
Self-reflection
After identifying oneself, it is necessary to reflect on how this identity affects how we see the world and interact with others.
STEP 03
Awareness of prejudices
When we understand ourselves and our perspectives, we can begin to identify and challenge our own biases.
STEP 04
Empathy and perspective-taking
This step opens the door to understanding other people's perspectives, which is central to collaboration and communication.
STEP 05
Understanding collective responsibility
Once we have built understanding and empathy, we can begin to see how our individual actions contribute to the larger context.
STEP 06
Action-oriented reflection
Having understood our responsibilities, it is time to put these insights into action.
STEP 07
Continuous growth
Finally, to ensure that change is sustainable, we must view development as an ongoing process.

Explore 7 Steps: Questions for Reflection and Growth

1. Self-Identification: Who am I?

- Which roots matter most to me – and which ones need care for me to truly flourish?
- How do my choices reflect the values I hold most dear?
- How does trust shape my sense of security and my willingness to take risks?

2. Self-Reflection: How does my identity shape my worldview?

- How have my experiences and perspectives influenced how I view others and the possibility of change?
- What opportunities or obstacles has my background created for me?
- How does my perspective as someone who has always lived in Åland differ from that of someone who has moved here?

3. Awareness of Prejudices: What biases do I carry?

- How can I recognize and challenge my own assumptions?
- In what ways might my behavior unintentionally reinforce negative patterns?
- Are there unconscious biases–such as prioritizing convenience or familiarity – that lead me to view certain sustainable choices as unrealistic or inaccessible?

4. Empathy and Perspective-Taking: How might others experience the world?

- What tools can help me better understand perspectives different from my own?
- How can I intentionally create space for diverse voices in the environments I'm part of?

5. Understanding Collective Responsibility: How do I fit into the bigger picture?

- If everyone lived the way I do, what kind of world would we create?
- What collaborations or partnerships can I build to support shared goals?
- How does my lifestyle or profession contribute to either environmental harm or positive change?

6. Action-Oriented Reflection: How can I turn awareness into action?

- What specific steps can I take to support meaningful change?
- How can I make small, sustainable shifts in daily life that contribute to a larger impact?

7. Continuous Growth: What can I keep learning and improving over time?

- How can I regularly reflect on my progress and adjust along the way?
- What resources or practices can help support my long-term development?

Connecting the six roots with the seven steps

The "Everyone Can Flourish" framework bridges existential principles and practical pedagogy through six roots and seven steps. This section demonstrates how each root–identity and meaning, community, resilience, justice, trust, and generosity - is clearly connected to the concrete steps required to cultivate and strengthen them.

The root Identity & Meaning is grounded in self-awareness and recognition of one's values and biases. Step 1 prompts reflection on personal identity and one's role in the collective. This deepens in Step 6, where insights are integrated into ongoing growth and contribution, and is reinforced in Step 7 through continued reflection and engagement–ensuring sustainable and meaningful transformation.

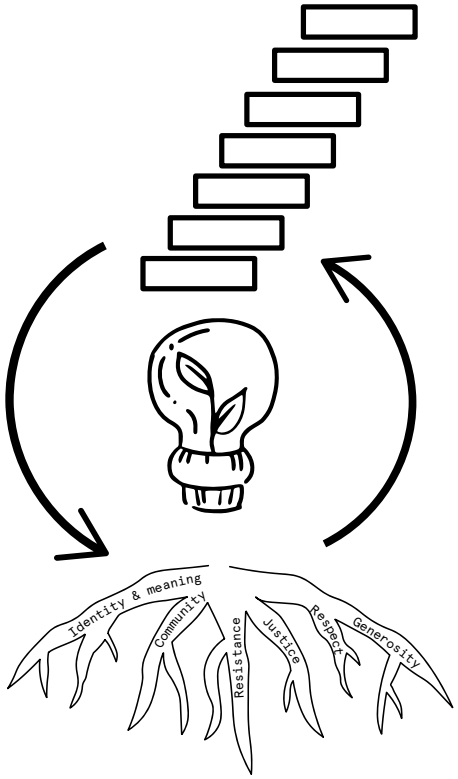
Step 2 cultivates a sense of Community by encouraging relationship-building and fostering a shared sense of purpose. Togetherness becomes both a condition for and a result of inner sustainability.

Resilience is developed in Step 3, where challenges are reframed as opportunities for growth. By understanding how adversity shapes us, individuals strengthen their inner capacity to navigate uncertainty and hardship.

Justice is central to Step 4, which offers tools for recognizing how personal choices influence fairness and social equity. This step challenges individuals to acknowledge injustices and take active responsibility in shaping more just and inclusive systems.

Trust is built through mutual accountability and respect. It is fostered by actions that align with shared values and a spirit of collaboration – laying the groundwork for lasting relationships and collective resilience.

Generosity emerges as a guiding principle in Step 5, rooted in the understanding of collective responsibility. It is carried into Step 6, where it becomes action: supporting others, sharing resources, and contributing to positive change in tangible ways.

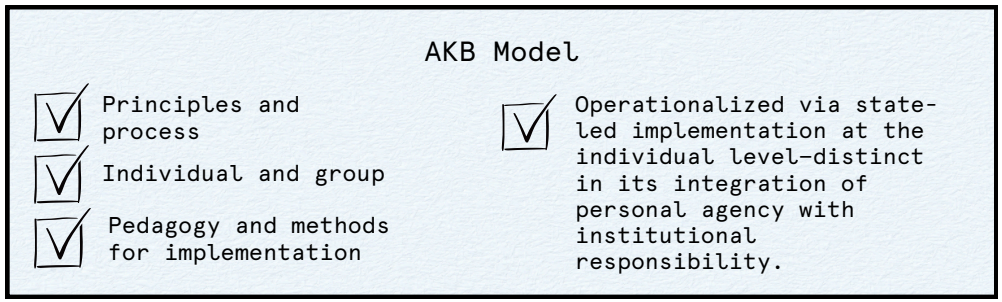


Overview of Processes, Principles, and Implementation Methods

To better understand the models and philosophies that can support the vision of "Everyone Can Flourish", a comparative overview of relevant concepts has been compiled. The table on the next page maps each model according to key dimensions: whether it functions as a process or principle, whether it focuses on individuals or groups, and whether it offers a concrete pedagogy or method for implementation. It also assesses the extent to which each concept can be applied to individuals through public sector interventions and identifies areas requiring further development and operationalization. Localization is taken into account to highlight which models consider specific cultural and regional contexts.

The analysis reveals that many established models and frameworks lack both practical tools for implementation and sensitivity to local context. Notably, `Mainstreaming Inner Sustainability' by Christine Wamsler and Gustav Osberg (2023) underscores this gap, pointing to the need for actionable tools within existing sustainability frameworks. Their work highlights precisely the space that the AKB Model is designed to fill.

The AKB Model (named after the original Swedish-language "Alla kan blomstra"– eng. "Everyone Can Flourish") offers an innovative and human-centered approach to operationalizing inner sustainability and human flourishing. By bridging individual needs with institutional capacities, it addresses critical gaps in both current theory and practice. Designed to be culturally adaptable and scalable, the model holds promise not only for Åland but also for broader application across diverse contexts. Though full implementation lies ahead, the AKB Model provides a robust theoretical foundation for continued research, pilot initiatives, and long-term integration into sustainability and development strategies.


AKB Model
Principles and process
Individual and group
Pedagogy and methods for implementation
Operationalized via state-led implementation at the individual level–distinct in its integration of personal agency with institutional responsibility.

Existential philosophy (1800-onwards) • Just a basic framework • No localization aspect or pedagogy/implementation method • Individual level • Deep insights into existence and purpose, historical relevance in times of crisis, but lack of concrete methodology	**Non-Western existential philosophy** • Just a basic framework • No localization aspect or pedagogy/implementation method • Individual level • Alternative perspectives, highlighting cultural diversity and other beliefs. But difficult to operationalize and integrate into policy frameworks	**Nussbaums "Capabilities Approach" (1980-talet)** • Just a basic framework • No localization aspect or pedagogy/implementation method • Individual and group level • Supports policy development, focuses on human capabilities. But lacks implementation tools, not operationalized.	**The Transtheoretical Model (TTM) (1983)** • Just process framework • No localization aspect but pedagogical method exists • Individual level • Clear framework for behavior change, but limited to specific areas, no localization focus
Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (1985) • Just a basic framework • No localization aspect but pedagogical method exists • Individual level • Focus on psychological needs, scientific support. But lacks broader implementation tools.	**Kotter's 8-step change model (1995)** • Just process framework • No localization aspect but pedagogical method partly present • Group level • Clear structure for change within organizations with a focus on leadership/communication. Limited, not for individual level or cultural adaptation.	**Integral theory (1997)** • Just a basic framework • No localization aspect or pedagogy/implementation method • Individual and group level • Integrates multiple perspectives but is difficult to operationalize.	**Seligman's Positive Psychology (1998)** • Just a basic framework • No localization aspect but pedagogical method partly present • Individual and group level • Focus on well-being and prosperity, but limitations in practical community coverage
Broaden-and-Build teori (1998) • Just a basic framework • No localization aspect or pedagogy/implementation method • Individual level • Focus on the role of positive emotions in development, not directly policy relevant.	**Dwecks "Growth Mindset" (2006)** • Just a basic framework • No localization aspect but pedagogical method partly present • Individual level • Strengthens resilience and learning, but limited localization aspect, not broad policy adaptation.	**Fogg Behavior Model (2007)** • Just process framework • No localization aspect but pedagogical method exists • Individual level • Clear and scalable method for behavior change, but not integrated with government systems.	**PERMA models (2011)** • Just a basic framework • No localization aspect but pedagogical method partly present • Individual and group level • Focus on well-being; broad application, but lacks practical implementation tools and localization aspect
Second-Wave Positive Psychology (2015) • Just a basic framework • No localization aspect but pedagogical method partly present • Individual and group level • Emphasizes balance between positive and negative experiences, but limited scope of application, not policy-adapted	**Inner Development Goals (IDG) (2020)** • Just a basic framework • No localization aspect but pedagogical method partly present • Individual or group level • The only thing that links internal development to global sustainability goals, but a concrete plan for implementation is missing.	**Flourish Model (2020)** • Just principle and process framework • Has localization aspect and pedagogy • Individual or group level • Integrates values with ecological systems and emphasizes wholeness, not proven in practice, requires deep localization adaptation.	**Mainstreaming Inner Sustainability (2023)** • Just principle • No localization aspect or pedagogy/implementation method • Individual or group level • Highlights the importance of integrating personal and systemic aspects into climate policy, lacks concrete operationalization or direct policy implementation tools,

*More models are being mapped and will be included in future appendices.

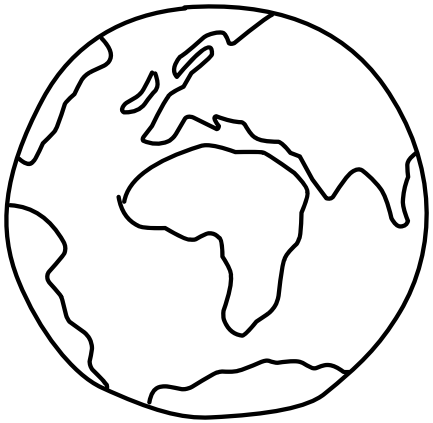
International models of well-being in governance

Several countries have embedded well-being into their governance models. The following examples offer inspiration and guidance for Åland's continued development:

Bhutan – Well-being as a guiding principle

- Gross National Happiness (GNH) replaces GDP as the primary measure of national success.
- All policy decisions undergo a "happiness impact assessment."
- Combines quantitative indicators with qualitative insights to assess holistic well-being.

New Zealand – Wellbeing budgets instead of GDP focus



- Introduced the Wellbeing Budget in 2019, shifting fiscal policy toward social and ecological goals – not just economic growth.
- Government spending must be justified using well-being indicators.
- Priority areas include mental health, social cohesion, and child poverty.

Wales – Long-term legislation for future generations

- The Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015) mandates that all public decisions promote sustainability and long-term well-being.
- An independent Future Generations Commissioner was established to oversee implementation and ensure accountability.
- 46 national indicators are used to monitor progress across social, environmental, and economic dimensions.

How does this relate to Åland?

- "Everyone Can Flourish" follows a similar path by placing well-being at the center of development.
- Åland's six roots reflect many of the same themes found in leading international models.
- These examples offer valuable lessons for strengthening policy integration and implementation.

Tools and practice

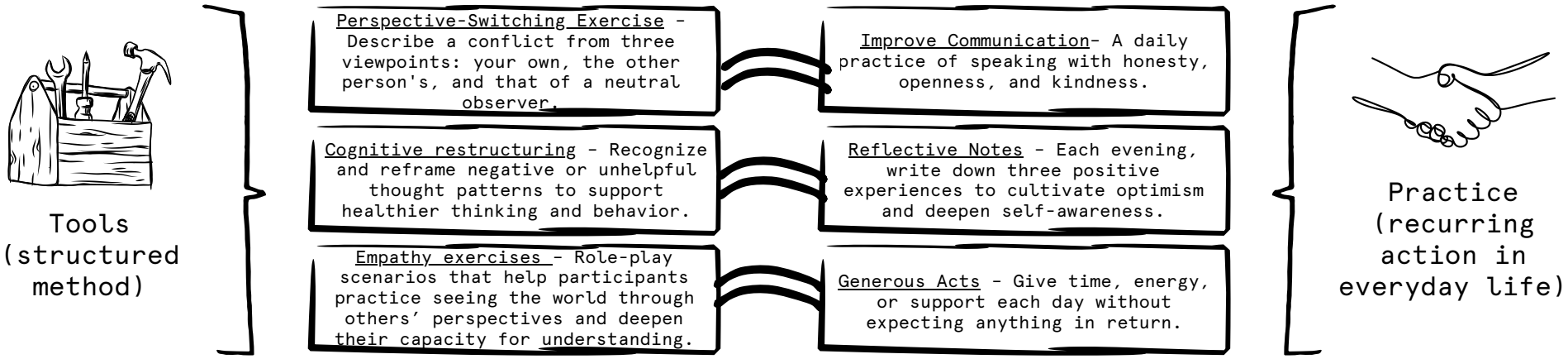
For “Everyone Can Flourish” to move beyond aspiration, it requires a thoughtful blend of structured methods and everyday application. That’s why this white paper includes both tools and practices–two essential components that together create the conditions for lasting change.

What is a tool, what is a practice, and how do they interact?

In this context, a tool is a structured method designed to develop inner capacities such as reflection, trust, and emotional intelligence. Tools provide specific techniques with clear steps for change.

A practice, by contrast, is an action that evolves into a habit – a way of integrating the tools into everyday life. While the tool offers direction and methodology, the practice ensures these methods become lived experience. Together, they form a stable foundation for both personal and collective flourishing.

The tools presented in this white paper offer structured pathways for inner development, but they only become truly effective when regularly applied through practice. The distinction can be illustrated as follows:


Tools (structured method)
Perspective-Switching Exercise - Describe a conflict from three viewpoints: your own, the other person's, and that of a neutral observer.
Cognitive restructuring - Recognize and reframe negative or unhelpful thought patterns to support healthier thinking and behavior.
Empathy exercises - Role-play scenarios that help participants practice seeing the world through others’ perspectives and deepen their capacity for understanding.
Improve Communication- A daily practice of speaking with honesty, openness, and kindness.
Reflective Notes - Each evening, write down three positive experiences to cultivate optimism and deepen self-awareness.
Generous Acts - Give time, energy, or support each day without expecting anything in return.
Practice (recurring action in everyday life)

From Insight to Implementation: Tools and practices across the 7-Steps

The guidance in "Everyone Can Flourish" is rooted in the seven steps of the AKB model. By connecting each step to concrete tools (structured methods) and practices (everyday actions and habits), the framework offers a clear pathway from insight to meaningful, lasting change.

		Tools (structured method)	Practice (Everyday action)
01	Self-identification	WOOP (goals and obstacles), Meet Yourself at 90 (life reflection)	Take a walk or spend time in nature to reflect without distractions. Leave your phone at home.
02	Self-reflection	ACT (value-based action), Theory U (deeper self-awareness)	End the day with journaling or quiet reflection to process your thoughts before sleep.
03	Awareness of prejudice	Immunity to Change (changing hidden biases), Intercultural Competence Training	Engage in small talk with someone you wouldn't normally connect with.
04	Empathy & perspective taking	Nonviolent Communication (NVC), Psychological Safety Training	Ask an open-ended question and listen with full attention– without interrupting.
05	Understanding collective responsibility	Systems thinking exercises, Nature Quest (reflection in nature)	Get involved in a local group or lend a hand at a community event.
06	Action-oriented reflection	Prototyping (rapid testing of ideas), ACT (behavioral goal setting)	Commit to a new habit for 30 days and observe its impact on your well-being.
07	Continuous growth	Mentoring Models, Reflective Notes	Expand your knowledge through a course, a good book, or a meaningful conversation with someone who inspires you.

Ending with Intention: Rooted change starts within

We stand at a crossroads – with a rare opportunity not just to redefine sustainability, but to truly embody it. Inner sustainability is the key that unlocks the door to both human and societal flourishing – something our current systems have yet to fully achieve. External structures may build the framework, but it is the inner dimension that lights the fire. That is where "Everyone Can Flourish" sets itself apart: by uniting pragmatism with hope, theory with action, and the individual with the collective.

A shift that begins within

Despite decades of progress in sustainability work, a core gap remains: the absence of human connection. Systems can address symptoms, but they rarely touch our deepest needs–meaning, identity, and belonging. This is where "Everyone Can Flourish" breaks new ground. It's more than a vision; it's a practical model that empowers individuals and strengthens communities through reflection, togetherness, and action.

When people feel well, they contribute more – to their workplaces, their communities, and society at large. The result is not only improved quality of life, but also reduced pressure on healthcare and social systems. Well-being generates resilience, and resilience fuels sustainable development.
This isn't an idealistic dream. It's practical. It's measurable. It's the future.

A vision that unites heart and mind

The AKB model is both a tool and a philosophy. Rooted in research-based principles, it also reaches into the human – and that is where its true power lies. It responds to the needs of both individuals and society, meeting them where they are and inviting incremental change that can scale and spread.

It does not rely on perfect conditions to succeed. Instead, it offers a flexible framework for navigating complexity and enabling transformation. For the pragmatist, it's a way to streamline public systems and build a more resilient, democratic society. For the idealist, it's a blueprint for collective flourishing – where hope is not just imagined, but enacted.

It's a vision of a new world – a light to navigate by, steady through both headwinds and tailwinds.

Yes, it presents a challenge. But lasting progress always begins with a seed – an idea that must be tested, refined, and allowed to take root. To dismiss the model is to miss the opportunity to unlock its potential and contribute to its evolution.

Åland – where change takes shape

Åland is more than a place – it's a symbol of what's possible. On the Islands of Peace, sustainability isn't just a vision; it's lived experience. Here, bold ideas are grounded in history and turned into action.

The "Everyone Can Flourish" (Alla kan blomstra, AKB) model is a practice-based framework that fills a critical gap in today's sustainability efforts. It links personal development with societal responsibility and provides tools to make values like trust, belonging, and inner resilience measurable and actionable.

If it works here, it can work elsewhere. Åland has the potential to serve as a beacon – a living example that human flourishing and sustainable development are not distant ideals, but practical, scalable, and deeply relevant. We are a testing ground for something greater: rooted, resilient, and ready to grow.

A legacy of human flourishing

"Everyone Can Flourish" has already sparked inspiration and real change – and this is only the beginning. It starts with small, intentional steps that build, over time, into meaningful transformation. By continuing to invest in inner sustainability, we can nurture a culture of community and shared responsibility, where everyone has the chance to participate, grow, and contribute.

Every person who feels they matter, every community that grows stronger, every society that dares to lead with humanity – that's how we shape the future.

This is a legacy to be proud of: a story of hope, courage, and collective strength. With resolve, Åland can become a living example that sustainability and human flourishing are not distant visions, but necessary, achievable realities.

"In being with others, the other is encountered as what he is in himself."
- Martin Heidegger

"The only journey is the inner one."
- Rainer Maria Rilke

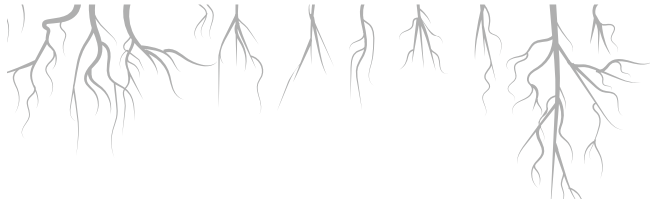
"Our life always expresses the result of our dominant thoughts."
- Soren Kierkegaard

"Faith is not about the existence or non-existence of God. It is about believing that love without reward is valuable."
- Gabriel Marcel

"He who wants to have a spring must endure the winter." - Karin Boye

"Growing is facing the unknown and letting it shape us, not avoiding it."
– Pär Lagerkvist

"Joy is a form of resistance, and flourishing is our response to the world."
– Kristina Lugn



"I am because we are."
- Ubuntu proverb

"Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself."
- Jean-Paul Sartre

"But what is happiness except the simple harmony between a man and the life he leads?"
- Albert Camus

This white paper was produced within the framework of the project Everyone Can Flourish – Deepening and Anchoring. Project leader Alyssa Bittner-Gibbs is the initiator and principal author. Micke Larsson, Secretary General of the Development and Sustainability Council, has contributed with recommendations.

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